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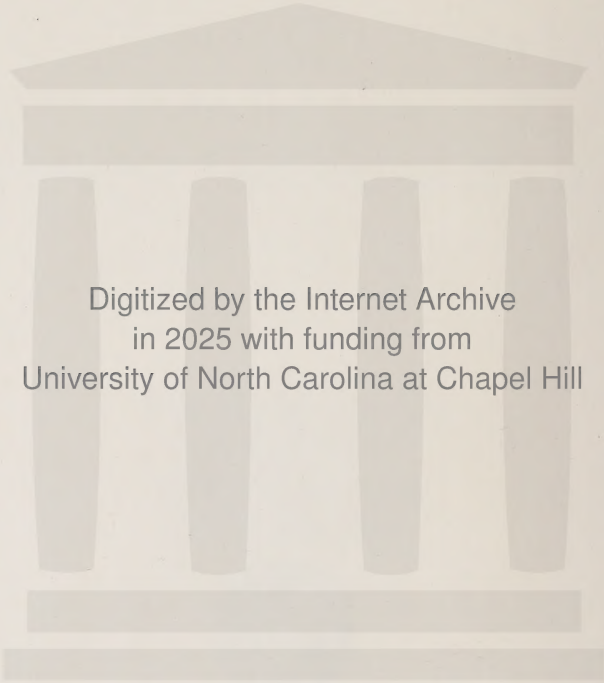

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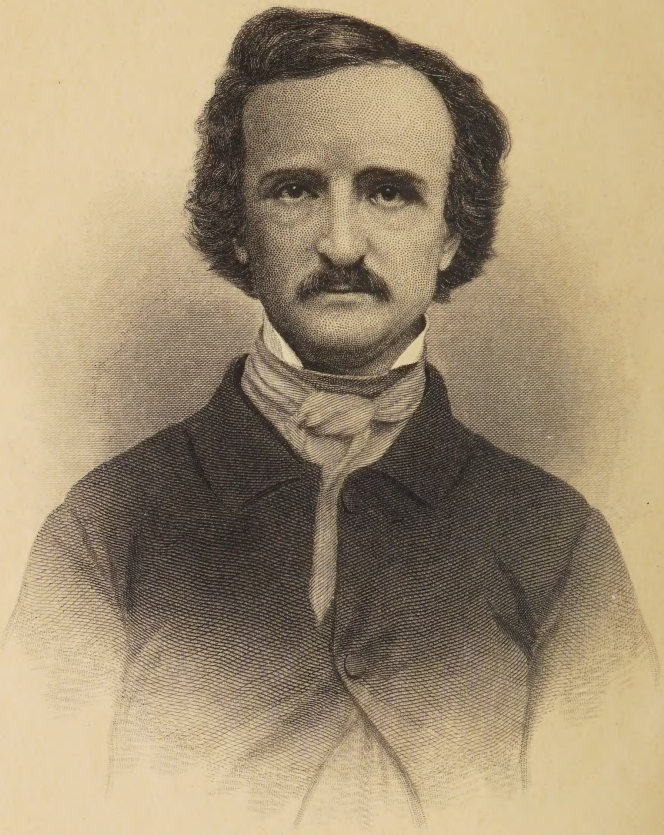

Edgar A. Poe

THE Complete Works of EDGAR ALLAN POE

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In Six Volumes
Volume I.

Boston and New York
Colonial Press Company
Publishers

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THE GENIUS OF POE.

BEFORE a man of genius can be understood, his life and his work must be studied, and their relation to, and dependence upon, each other determined. The successful prosecution of this study demands two faculties, one being that which is possessed by the biographer, whose business is to recover the truth of whatever he purposes to relate, the other, that which is possessed by the critic, whose business is to discover the value of whatever he purposes to examine. These faculties, particularly the latter, are exercised in two methods; the analytic, which detects and separates the component parts of what it scrutinizes, and the synthetic, which re-combines those parts into a consistent and harmonious whole. Nearly thirty-five years have elapsed since the death of Edgar Allan Poe, and his Life may now be said to be written. If he was misunderstood while alive (of which there is no evidence), he is not misunderstood to-day, for what with

Dr. Rufus W. Griswold on the one hand, and Mr. John H. Ingram on the other, a consensus of conclusions has been reached which is not likely to be disturbed. He belonged to the bright, but blasted brotherhood whose faults the world agrees to condone, partly because of the gifts which accompany them, and partly because of the misfortunes which they entail. There is that in men of genius which differentiates them from their fellow mortals, and which, if the source of their strength, is also the source of their weakness. It is the individuality which distinguishes genius, and which either governs it, or is governed by it; governs it, in men like Burns and Byron, and is governed by it, in men like Shakespeare and Milton. Whether it is restrainable by the will depends more upon the temperament than the will, for a weak will always succumbs in the end to a strong temperament. The character of Poe was as unlovely as the conduct to which it impelled him was willful. How much of his character was inherited we can only conjecture, so little is known respecting his parents; but whatever it may have been in the beginning, and might have become later, it was ruined by the indulgence of his foster-father, Mr. Allan. The spoiled child was the father of the spoiled man.

The reputation of Poe is based upon three different manifestations of his genius,—upon his poems, his stories, and his criticisms. He began to write poetry in his boyhood, and, like all boy poets, he imitated the authors whom he admired, and of whom the most renowned

was Lord Byron. He was captivated by the spiritual gloom of Byron, whose misanthropy he assumed, and whose despair he fancied he felt. It colored his earliest printed lyrics, which would be melancholy reading if they were sincere writing, and it stimulated him in the conception of Tamerlane, in which he reproduced as well as he could the movement of Byron's narrative verse. That a new poet had appeared could not be said before he had published his second volume, which attracted little or no attention, though it contained the perfect little poem, To Helen, and the first drafts of Israfel, The Sleeper, and The City in the Sea. This volume authenticated his genius, his originality, and the class of subjects in which he was to excel. Its range was narrow, but within that range it was imaginative, and there was a promise of beauty in it which was not fulfilled by his later work. It belonged to the school of romantic verse, and the chief impression it left upon the mind was a feeling of melancholy. This feeling may have been created for poetic purposes, or it may have been the natural expression of his genius. Whether he himself could have determined which it was is doubtful, so inseparable in him was the man and the artist. From the beginning he was a poetic artist. He had made up his mind that poetry consisted of such and such elements, and that they must be molded to such and such ends. He was as certain of his theory and practice as Wordsworth of his theory and practice, and it need hardly be

said that his theory, like Wordsworth's, was often contradicted by his practice. The didacticism which runs through Wordsworth's poetry, and which was probably in Mr. Arnold's mind when he defined poetry as a criticism of life, was worse than a crime in his eyes; it was a blunder which he would never overlook or forgive. His definition of poetry was, that it is The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty. "Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth. A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contemplation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the soul*, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the heart. I make Beauty, therefore—using the word as inclusive of the sublime—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes:—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth,

may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work:—but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem." Whether Poe's theory of what poetry should be is the correct one need not detain us here; what concerns us is his practice, and the result that he produced by it. What is the effect of his poetry, and what is the impression that it leaves in the mind? If an answer to this question were demanded of the readers of Tennyson and Keats, respecting their poetry, the answer would instantly be,—the Beautiful. This is not—cannot be the answer of Poe's readers respecting his poetry, unless their definition of the Beautiful differs from that which is generally held by cultivated minds and sensitive spirits, and unless they have submitted themselves to the spell of his dark and powerful genius. The poetry of Poe is characterized by certain qualities, which are not easily separable, and are rather to be felt than described; they are remote, elusive, pertaining to another world than this and another existence than our daily humdrum lives. He transports us to a visionary region, inhabited by shadows, and haunted by a sense of danger. Oppressed by all we see, or think we see, we are the prey of invisible terrors. It is as if we were in a world which had been destroyed; a purgatory from which there is no escape except into hell.

There is nothing in Poe's poetry which indicates that it was written from the heart,—no feeling which would have broken the heart it burdened if it had not wreaked itself on expression. There is a simulation of emotion in it, but the emotion is as imaginary as the method by which it is sought to be conveyed is artificial. The heroines of Poe—his Lenores, Annabel Lees, Ulalumes—are not women, but abstractions, which elude even the eye of imagination. They have neither form nor pressure. Natural description, as such, there is none in Poe, whose landscapes are generalities rather belonging to cloud-land than earth. His sense of form was good, but seldom to be depended on at first; if he reached the perfection for which he strove it was only after repeated trials and failures. No poet who wrote so little ever re-wrote that little so often, and so successfully. His critical faculty was more sure of itself in correction than in composition. He clearly estimated his powers, and what he could accomplish by them. He knew—none better—their limitations, and their want of fertility within those limitations. His mind was neither opulent nor prodigal; he was acquainted with his resources, and very careful in drawing upon them. They must have been nearly expended before his death, or he would hardly have set afloat so many false notes. It is difficult to believe that he was in earnest when he penned the jingling melodies of Annabel Lee, for to be in earnest with work like that would betray a disordered intellect. Still worse is the

rhythm of Ulalume, which is the insanity of versification. If these pieces affect their readers, as it is claimed they do, it is because the matter is superior to the manner. They are imaginative,—the one quaintly, the other strangely and darkly. The gloom which characterizes the poetry of Poe differs from the gloom which characterizes the poetry of Byron as the atmosphere in which a landscape is steeped differs from the landscape itself. It is felt rather than found in words, and is intellectual rather than moral. One feels in reading Byron that it was a relief to him to rail and to rave,—a relief to his mood if not his mind,—but one never feels this in reading Poe, to whom no relief appears possible. It is not his heart which has suffered, but his soul, his soul which is overshadowed by a mysterious sorrow, and is enamored of darkness and death. The bitterness of Byron was health itself when compared with the sick fancies of Poe. There can be no comparison between the two as artists, for except by chance, and at rare intervals, Byron was not an artist. He felt his work strongly, and dashed it off hurriedly, depending on his inspiration and not his composition. The pencil with which Poe traced his dark designs was a delicate one, and its lightest touch was effective. He divined singular effects and methods of producing them, combined them with great skill, and subordinated all to the harmonious whole at which he aimed. If the impalpable could be painted, he would have painted it; as it was he had to content himself with suggesting it. No modern

poet, except Tennyson, is so subtly and strangely suggestive.

These qualities, which are distinctive of the verse of Poe, are not attributes of the Beautiful, which he declared was the aim and end of poetry. It follows, therefore, that his verse is not poetry, or rather it would follow if we were to accept his definition as the true one, and test his verse by that alone. We refuse to do so, however, partly because we feel that the definition is too narrow, but more because we do not believe that poetry can be defined at all. If Poe ever quickens the sense of loveliness it is in the hinted description of the garden in the lines To Helen ("I saw thee once—once only—years ago"), and in The Sleeper, a late and an early poem in which the Beautiful is nearly attained. He affects different natures differently, and, unlike many poets, he affects all who are capable of being touched by poetry. To the multitude who enjoy the cheerful optimism of Longfellow and poets of his class, he is gloomy and hateful; to those who are predisposed to melancholy, he is the melodious laureate of dead hopes; to those with whom poetry is an art, and not a feeling, he is at once attractive and repulsive; a gifted creature with a morbid personality, clinging to the weakness which is its wretchedness, and the madness which is its death.

At what period of his tumultuous career Poe began to write stories his biographers have not discovered, but it was probably not until after Mr. Allan had discarded

him. There is an interregnum in his life between the publication of his second volume of verse in New York, in 1831, and his appearance in Baltimore in 1833, in which he is believed to have lived, or tried to live, by his pen, and in which he is known to have copied six stories in a small quarto bound book. They were experimental as compared with those which he wrote a little later on, the experiment being in the method of Defoe, the first and greatest master of the English school of realistic story-writers, and two which are known to have been among them, A Descent into the Maelström, and MS. Found in a Bottle, are fair examples of Poe's early manner. The method he employed was the only one that would convey the impression he sought to convey, for it is the only one through which fiction can be palmed off as fact. It depends for its success on the accumulation of details, and the order in which those details are grouped, the use of both in the art of the story-teller being to authenticate his story. If it were not the truth he is telling us (we say to ourselves), he would not be so careful in the telling. His precision may be a little tedious, but it is important, no doubt, in its bearing on what is to come. It is by such means as these that our credulity is imposed upon, and the sheerest invention accepted as absolute verity. Poe never departed from the method of Defoe, but he carried it farther than Defoe, for he carried it from the level tract of prose into the highest region of poetry, from things which might have

happened, though they never did, to things which could not have happened at all, though he contrived to fool the imagination with them. His imagination was as calculating as his method, and both were mathematical.

Beginning with what may be called realistic narration, Poe soon adventured into the dark borderland of mystery, and, like all young explorers, he went too far at first. He went too far when he wrote the confession of a madman in Berenice, as he went too far in another direction when he wrote The Facts of the Case of M. Valdemar. Whether madness be a fit subject for art, may be doubted, but if it be, it would certainly attach to characters who can awaken pity and compassion, and to incidents and catastrophes which are pathetic and not repulsive. Madness, as delineated by Shakespeare, is a tragic misfortune; as delineated by Poe it is a horrible crime. His madmen were all criminals before they were madmen. The stories in which they figure affect us like a nightmare while we read them, affect us until we ask ourselves if we, too, are not mad. The power of such writing is certain; its use, its good, its sanity, are not so certain. But whatever may be thought of it, it is a province of story-telling in which Poe has no equal. A realist in his method, he was so far an idealist in his conceptions that he cannot be said ever to have drawn real people, or painted real life. The beings of his mind are not of clay. There is a shadowy likeness among them, his heroes being for the most part high-born and romantic, and his heroines

singularly beautiful. Victims of a diseased imagination, they lead visionary lives, and are doomed to an early death. The world which they inhabit is one to which dreams alone can admit us—a world which no man ever saw—remote, phantasmal, mysterious, where everything is strange, so strange that Death has ceased to be a terror, and Beauty is a sick loveliness swooning away in atmospheres of melancholy.

Poe's most remarkable achievement in the region of the supernatural is The Fall of the House of Usher, which occupies the same gloomy eminence in prose fiction that Browning's Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came occupies in romantic poetry. It is of imagination all compact, an imagination which reveals the secrets of the heart, the dark places of the soul. Equally remarkable and rememberable, though for different reasons, is William Wilson, a profound study of a wayward nature, of which he was in a certain sense the original. Related to the class in which these stories belong are others like The Black Cat, The Cask of Amontillado, and The Tell-Tale Heart, which are so sinister as to be shocking. Another class, which may be described as stories of ratiocination, was diligently cultivated by Poe, whose success therein, in The Murders of the Rue Morgue, The Purloined Letter, and The Gold Bug, was more highly estimated forty years ago than it is to-day, when the open secret of their construction which he alone appeared to possess is now the property, or one of the properties, of

sundry English and French story-tellers, like Collins and Du Boisgobey. There is nothing in English literature with which the stories of Poe can be compared, and nothing in American literature, except the stories of Hawthorne, which are always as imaginative as those of Poe, and occasionally as dark in texture. If Hawthorne's master was Tieck, as Poe declared, the master of Poe, so far as he had one, was Hoffmann. But given his genius, he did not need a master long, if at all. It was his glory and his misfortune to be unique.

It was the fashion while Poe was living to call him a critic, a delusion which could never have obtained in any country where the principles of criticism had been studied, and the practice of criticism cultivated. He had an acute mind that was penetrative in trifles, and that delighted to detect discrepancies, but not a mind that could rise to and grapple with principles. He judged everything by his individual preferences, which were temperamental rather than intellectual, and to fail to satisfy these was to fail entirely. He had no reverence for the great names of antiquity, and he was unjust to most of his contemporaries. What Pope was to the victims of the Dunciad, he was to the poor Literati of America. *Væ victis!*

R. H. STODDARD.

THE CENTURY,
New York, May 5th, 1884

LIFE OF EDGAR ALLAN POE.

THE most democratic American, if it were left to his choice, would prefer to have been well born rather than ill born. We are not solicitous about our ancestors, however; for whoever they were, we care more for ourselves than for them. We have adopted as our social motto the couplet of the poet:

> "Honor and shame from no condition rise:
> Act well your part, there all the honor lies."

Another English poet, earlier and better than Pope, has summed up the creed of manhood in a vigorous passage, which ought to be written in letters of gold:

> "'T is poor, and not becoming perfect gentry,
> To build their glories at their fathers' cost;
> But at their own expense of blood or virtue
> To raise them living monuments. Our birth
> Is not our own act; honor upon trust
> Our ill deeds forfeit; and the wealthy sums
> Purchased by others' fame or sweat will be
> Our stain; for we inherit nothing truly,
> But what our actions make us worthy of."

Another poet, the dramatist Thomas Middleton, dis-

coursing upon fame, touches indirectly upon the question of ancestry:

> "The fame that a man wins himself is best;
> That he may call his own; honors put to him
> Make him no more a man than his clothes do,
> And are as soon ta'en off; for in the warmth,
> The heat comes from the body, not the weeds;
> So man's true fame must strike from his own deeds."

If there is any one man who has no need of ancestors, it is the poet, yet he is the one above all others for whom his biographers determine to discover a distinguished ancestry. They fail to do so, of course; but they persist, nevertheless, not being able to understand how a poet can be the first as well as the last of his line. That such is the fact, though, we learn from the biographers of all the great English poets—in fact, from the biographies of all the English poets, except Coleridge; and that such is the fact I should have said from the biographers of all the American poets with whom I am acquainted, if I did not remember reading within the past year that three of the most eminent of these poets are descendants of the old Puritan trooper John Alden; and if I did not read to-day that another, not so eminent, was descended from an ancient Italian family.

This family, which was called De la Poe, must have been very old, if it be true, as we are assured it was, that the name antedated the river Po. It was migratory, passing from Italy into France, where it became Le Poer, and from France into England, Wales, and Ireland. It was in

good repute in England in the last half of the twelfth century, for Sir Roger le Poer accompanied Prince John as a marshal in his expedition into Ireland in 1185; and it was well established in Ireland in the first quarter of the fourteenth century (1324), when it was powerful enough to withstand the Church, which brought an accusation of sorcery against Lady Alice Kyteler, who had for her fourth husband Sir John le Poer, and for her defender Arnold le Poer, seneschal of Kilkenny Castle, who seized the person of Richard, Bishop of Ossory, by whom the accusation was brought, and confined him in that stronghold. It was involved in the internal dissensions of Ireland at a later period; and when that unfortunate country was invaded by Cromwell, in 1649, only one of its three leading branches escaped his vengeance. Its name gradually changed, as I have remarked, De la Poe becoming le Poer, and le Poer, Power and Poe; and with its change of name there was a change of its employments, the marshals and seneschals of old time subsiding in the last century into a country gentleman, who was the father of Lady Blessington; of an attorney, who wrote the song of *Gramachree* ("As down on Banna's banks I strayed"); and a certain Mr. John Poe, whose only claim to remembrance is that he was the great-grandfather of Edgar Allan Poe.

Twenty years have passed since the ancestry of Poe was traced back to French and Italian origins, the authenticity of which I am not able to vouch for. That

Sir John le Poer and Arnold le Poer were historic characters, is evident from Wright and Ennemoser, both of whom relate the episode of Lady Alice Kyteler; and that we stand upon firm biographic ground when we reach John Poe I see no reason to doubt. We know less of him, however, than of a naval officer named MacBride, with whom he was connected by marriage, of Scottish descent, though his early years were passed in Ireland. John MacBride entered the naval service of Great Britain, in which he was a lieutenant in 1758. He was the commander of an armed cutter in 1761, and in 1799 Admiral of the Blue. An able, energetic officer, he distinguished himself in the naval warfare of the time, and in 1785 was returned to Parliament for Plymouth. He died in the last year of the last century. The age of John MacBride, whom Poe's biographers have hitherto styled James McBride, is nowhere stated; but he must have lived nearly a hundred years, to have had a daughter old enough to marry John Poe *before* 1743, the year in which his son David, the grandfather of the poet, was born in Londonderry. I conclude, therefore, that Jane MacBride was his sister, not his daughter.

John and Jane Poe emigrated to America about the middle of the last century, and settled in Pennsylvania, where their son David grew up to manhood, and married a Miss Carnes. Of the family of this lady, who is said to have been beautiful, we know nothing, nor of the circumstances under which David Poe married her. The Amer-

ican Poes could hardly have ranked among the gentry of the time, whatever the Irish Poes may have done, for in the first historic mention of David Poe he figures as "one Poe, a wheelwright." It occurs in a letter written on the 10th of December, 1776, by Robert Christie, sheriff of Baltimore, who was driven from his post for loyalty by a rebellious uprising of the citizens of that place, among whom was this Mr. Poe, "who seemed at the head of the lower class." In the next mention of Mr. Poe (March 25, 1777) he assists in an attack upon Mr. William Goddard, editor of the *Maryland Journal*, who had become obnoxious to the sensitive citizens of Baltimore generally, and particularly to the Whig Club, of which Mr. Poe was a member. He seems to have been of a military turn of mind, for on the 17th of September, 1779, he was appointed Assistant Deputy-Quartermaster for Baltimore, by the Governor and Council of Maryland; and he was certainly patriotic, for when the State funds in his hands were exhausted he embarrassed himself by drawing upon his private means. When Lafayette was in Baltimore, in 1781, he supplied him with five hundred dollars to aid in clothing his troops; and, not to be behind her husband, Mrs. Poe cut out with her own hands five hundred pairs of pantaloons for them, the making of which she superintended. His patriotism outran his discretion, for he not only crippled his finances for the time, but accepted vouchers (mostly, it is said, in the shape of letters from Washington and Lafayette), which the military author-

ities refused to accept, on account of their technical informalities. Gathering together what was left of his property after peace was declared, the ex-quartermaster and ex-wheelwright engaged in the dry-goods business in Baltimore. Public sentiment brevetted him General Poe as the years went on, and elected him a member of the First Branch of the City Council. This was in 1799–1800, his fifty-seventh year. Fourteen years later, when the city was threatened by the British, he volunteered in its defence, and took an active part in the battle of North Point, where they were defeated by the Maryland militia. He died on the 17th of October, 1816, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, leaving his widow as a legacy to his country, which declined to repay what he had advanced in its extremity, but granted her—at least the Legislature of Maryland did—a small pension, as a recognition of the equity of her claim. She was living in the autumn of 1824, when she was waited upon by Lafayette, who was then on his second visit to America. "The last time I embraced you, madame," he said, with tears in his eyes, "you were younger and more blooming than now." He then spoke of her husband, who he declared was his friend, and said that the aid that he had received, both from him and her, was greatly beneficial to his troops. When his visit was over, he went with his staff to the grave of General Poe in the First Presbyterian Churchyard, and, kneeling on the ground, kissed the sod above him, and exclaimed, "Here lies a noble heart."

General Poe was the father of six children, the names of four of whom have reached us,—David, George, Samuel, and Maria. David Poe, Jr., is said by one authority to have been the first, and by others to have been the fourth, child of General Poe. It is not stated when or where he was born, but probably during the Revolution, and at Baltimore. He is described as having been a handsome, clever young fellow, and as having received the best education that could be procured in Baltimore; and he is known to have studied law in the office of William Gwynne, Esq., an eminent member of the Maryland Bar, and the editor of the *Federal Gazette*, and to have united himself with a Thespian Club. His passion for theatricals seems not to have been discouraged by his father, for the Club to which he belonged acted in a large room in a house owned by that gentleman in Baltimore Street.

While General Poe was handling the yardstick in his dry-goods store in Baltimore, there arrived in New York, from England, a company of comedians who had been engaged by a Mr. Solee for the City Theatre, Charleston, South Carolina. They remained at New York long enough to fill an engagement in the old John Street Theatre; and among the pieces which they played was the popular farce of "The Spoiled Child," in which a Miss Elizabeth Arnold performed the part of *Maria*. Who Miss Arnold was, except that she was an English actress, and what was her rank in the theatrical profession in the last decade of the last century, can only be conjectured

now. There is a vague tradition that she was young and beautiful, and that her success, whatever it was, depended more upon her vivacity than her talents. I assume that she proceeded to Charleston with the company to which she belonged; that they played there; and that, when their usual seasons were over, they played in other Southern cities,—in Richmond, Baltimore, and the like. She is said to have appeared in Baltimore while David Poe, Jr., was a member of the Thespian Club, and is also said to have been a Mrs. Hopkins at the time. But however this may have been, it is certain that he became enamored of her, and resolved to adopt the stage as a profession. He left Baltimore secretly, and went to Charleston, whither I have no doubt she had preceded him, and where he was announced to make his "first appearance on any stage." The newspapers carried the intelligence to his uncle, William Poe, who was living in Augusta, Georgia, and who hastened at once to Charleston. He succeeded in rescuing his nephew from the degradation into which he had fallen; and taking him back with him to Augusta, placed him in the law office of the Hon. John Forsyth, whose sister he had married; but he did not succeed in destroying his infatuation for his inamorata. They were married in the spring of 1806, greatly to the disgust of General Poe; and, being discarded by that irascible old tradesman, they were obliged to lie in the bed they had made for themselves. We hear of them next in New York, where Miss Arnold had appeared nine

years before in "The Spoiled Child," and where Mrs. Poe now appeared with the spoiled child to whom she had given her heart and hand. It was a summer season at the new Vauxhall Garden (July 16, 1806), and she played the part of *Priscilla Tomboy*. Her lord and master appeared two nights afterward as *Frank* in "Fortune's Frolic." We have to imagine, for we cannot trace at this late day, the theatrical career of the Poes. There is no reason to think that it differed from the average career of men and women in that profession. They shared the fortunes of the company in which they were engaged; resided in the city, or cities in which it was stationed; journeyed with it to provincial towns where it enchanted the rustic mind; attended rehearsals during the day, and performed their parts at night; led, in short, a wandering, unsettled, exciting life, which was not conducive to domestic virtues. A child was born to them, a boy, whom they named William Henry, and whose coming is said to have healed the breach with General Poe.

We lose sight of the Poes until the winter of 1809, when we find them engaged at the Boston Theatre. It appears from the *Boston Gazette*, which was published twice a week, and contained the bills of the theatre, that Mrs. Poe played in January on the evenings of the 5th, 9th, 12th, and 20th; in February on the evenings of the 10th, 13th, and 24th; in March on the evenings of the 6th, 13th, 20th, and 24th; in April on the evenings of the 3d, 7th, 10th, 15th, 17th, 21st, and 24th; and on the

evenings of the 1st, 8th, and 12th of May. She appeared at first in pantomimes and minor parts, but on the 7th of April she played *Juliet*, and on the 17th and 21st of the same month *Ophelia*. The birth of their second son, Edgar, occurred during this Boston engagement of the Poes. A glance at the dates just given shows, I think, that it could not well have been on the 19th of January, but that it might have been on the 19th of February; I fix upon that day, therefore, as his birthday.

The lives of actors and actresses have a glamour about them before the footlights, which disappears when one is behind the scenes. Theatrical anecdotes are often entertaining, but theatrical memoirs are always dull. I recall no exception to the rule, from the days of Cibber, whose Apology for his Life contains the best examples of theatrical portraiture that we have, to the days of Macready, who has contrived to bestow all his tediousness upon us in his Reminiscences. If the great names of the stage are little to us after they are dead, the little names are surely less. If we feel any interest in the parents of Poe, it is not on their account, but on his, for they were by no means distinguished in their profession. His mother was considered to have talent as an actress and a singer, but from the silence that has been preserved about his father it is probable that he was merely tolerated on account of his wife. What we know of him does not impress us in his favor. He had wasted in amateur theatricals the time he should have spent studying law; he had left his

home secretly to become an actor; and he had married an actress in defiance of the wishes of his parents. It was not a good beginning for a young man, but it was not so bad that he might not hope to live it down, and he accordingly set to work to do so. His father forgave him and his wife helped him to maintain himself and his children.

The fictitious life of the stage interferes, I think, with the real life of its followers, and destroys the attachments which cluster about home. They have no time to become rooted anywhere; they are the luxuries, not the necessities of civilization, and when they cease to amuse in one place there is nothing left for them but to amuse in another,

"For those that live to please, must please to live."

Elizabeth Arnold played at New York and at Charleston, and as Mrs. Poe at New York and Boston. From the latter city she proceeded with her husband and her two children to New York again, and filled an engagement at the Park Theatre. We lose sight of her until the autumn of 1811, when she was attached to the Richmond Theatre. She was now the mother of three children—William Henry, who was in his fourth or fifth year; Edgar, who was in his third year; and Rosalie, who was a babe in arms. She was ill, she was destitute, and if the recollections of those who knew her at this time are to be trusted, she was abandoned by her husband.

Her situation was discovered by several ladies of Richmond, who visited her and assisted her, and who remarked

upon her refinement of manner and the neatness of her surroundings. She was a lady to the last. Her public record closed with a paragraph in the *Richmond Enquirer* of Tuesday, December 10, 1811: "Died on Sunday last, Mrs. Poe, one of the actresses of the company at present playing on the Richmond boards. By the death of this lady the stage has been deprived of one of its chief ornaments. And to say the least of her, she was an interesting actress, and never failed to catch the applause and command the admiration of the beholder." A mystery hangs over the end of David Poe, who has already disappeared from the scene forever, and over the conduct of his parents, who do not appear to have concerned themselves about his children. It is difficult not to convict them of heartlessness, for whatever their son and his wife may have been, their children were certainly guiltless. They had committed no fault, except the involuntary fault of being born, which is so common that it is usually condoned. It would have gone hard with the three little orphans if their future had depended upon their kin, but fortunately for them it did not. Their helplessness made them friends, who supplied the places of the parents they had lost. Edgar was adopted by Mr. John Allan, a Richmond merchant, Rosalie by a Mr. McKenzie, another Richmond merchant, while William Henry was placed under the charge of Mr. Henry Didier, a Baltimore merchant, who was his godfather.

The childhood of Edgar, who was now called Edgar

Allan, was a very happy one. His adopted parents, who had no children of their own, admired his beauty and cleverness and petted and indulged him to a dangerous extent. Nothing was too good for him. They dressed him like a young prince, and took him with them to the fashionable watering-places year after year. To correct him was to break his spirit, and correction was accordingly prohibited. This prohibition was either not known, or was disregarded, on one occasion by a widow who kept a school to which he was sent. Attached to the playground of this school was a garden in which vegetables were raised, and into which the scholars were forbidden to enter, the penalty for so doing being the suspension around the neck, during school-hours, of one of these vegetables—a turnip, a carrot, or possibly a cabbage. Master Edgar Allan was detected in violating this rule, and, like other offenders, was compelled to wear this esculent decoration. He submitted sullenly, and when school was over ran home with it hanging around his neck. Mr. Allan was so angry when he saw him that he went instantly to the school-room, gave the mistress a piece of his mind, paid her what was due her for tuition, and ended for the time the education of Master Edgar Allan.

Mr. Allan was called to Europe, either to transact business for the mercantile house of which he was a member ("Ellis and Allan"), or to obtain possession of a large fortune which had been left him by an old uncle. He set sail for England in the summer of 1816, accompanied by

his wife and his adopted son, who was in his eighth year, and whom he placed in the Manor House School at Stoke-Newington. The memory of this school and its master, Dr. Bransby, impressed itself so vividly upon the mind of the child that he was able to reproduce it years after in his story of "William Wilson." Stoke-Newington is somewhat changed from what it was sixty-four years ago, but the Manor House School still remains substantially as he described it. It was an old and irregular building, with extensive grounds, surrounded with a high and solid brick wall, topped with a bed of mortar and broken glass. At an angle of this ponderous wall frowned a more ponderous gate, which was riveted and studded with iron bolts, and surmounted with jagged iron spikes, and which was opened but thrice a week—once every Saturday afternoon, when the boys, attended by the ushers, were permitted to take brief walks in a body through some of the neighboring fields, and twice during Sunday, when they were paraded in the same formal manner to the morning and evening service of the one church in the village, of which their master was pastor. "With how deep a spirit of wonder and perplexity was I wont to regard him from our remote pew in the gallery, as, with step solemn and slow, he ascended the pulpit! This reverend man, with countenance so demurely benign, with robes so glossy and so clerically flowing, with wig so minutely powdered, so rigid, and so vast—could this be he who, of late, with sour visage, and in snuffy habiliments,

administered, ferule in hand, the Draconian laws of the academy? Oh, gigantic paradox, too utterly monstrous for solution!"

It was, indeed, a quaint old building in which the little American boy passed his school-days in England—there was really no end to its windings, to its incomprehensible subdivisions. It was difficult for him, at any given time, to say with certainty upon which of its two stories he happened to be, nor was he ever able to ascertain with precision in what remote locality lay the little sleeping apartment assigned to himself and some eighteen or twenty other scholars. From each room to every other room there were three or four steps, either in ascent or descent, and the lateral branches were innumerable, inconceivable, and perpetually returning in upon themselves. The school-room, which was the largest in the house, was long, narrow, and dismally low, with pointed Gothic windows and a ceiling of oak. In a remote angle was a small enclosure with a massy door, which was the *sanctum* of Dr. Bransby. In other angles were two similar boxes, one being the pulpit of the classical, the other the pulpit of the English and mathematical tutor. "Interspersed about the room, crossing and re-crossing in endless irregularity, were innumerable benches and desks, black, ancient, and time-worn, piled desperately with much-bethumbed books, and so besmeared with initial letters, names at full length, grotesque figures, and other multiplied efforts of the knife, as to have entirely lost what little

of original form might have been their portion in days long departed. A huge bucket with water stood at one extremity of the room, and a clock of stupendous dimensions at the other."

The reminiscences of Master Edgar Allan Poe, which colored the reminiscences of Mr. William Wilson in his description of his old school-house, are autobiographic to that extent, and no further. He was not born on the 19th of January, 1813, as Mr. William Wilson claims, and he did not pass at Stoke-Newington the years of the third lustrum of his life. He could not have remained there more than two years, if so long, for the Allans returned with him to America in the summer of 1818. There was at that time in Richmond an academy of repute, kept by Mr. Joseph H. Clarke, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, in whose charge he was placed in September of that year. Such, at any rate, was the belief of that gentleman, who was living in Baltimore four years ago. The boy was brought to him by Mr. Allan, and he questioned him in regard to his Latin. He had studied in the grammar as far as the irregular verbs, he said, and he declined *penna*, *domus*, *fructus*, and *res*. He was then asked if he could decline the adjective *bonus*, and he did so in a way that struck his future master, *i. e.*, *bonus*, a good man; *bona*, a good woman; *bonum*, a good thing. If the recollection of Mr. Clarke is to be trusted, Edgar Allan was in his school five years. He read Ovid, Cæsar, Virgil, Cicero, and Horace, and Xenophon and Homer;

he preferred the poets to the prose writers, but was averse to mathematics. He was ambitious to excel as a scholar, and acquitted himself well in his classes, though he was not conspicuously studious. His poetical compositions were superior to those of his school-fellows, and so well thought of by Mr. Allan that he brought a manuscript volume of them one day to his master, and asked his advice in the matter of printing them. He was told that the lad possessed a good deal of self-esteem, and that it would be very injurious to him to be talked about as the author of a printed book at his age, which Mr. Clarke believed to be about ten. Mr. Allan appeared to feel the force of the objection, but he retained his admiration for Master Edgar's poetry, which he was in the habit of reading to his friends—prosaic souls, no doubt, who looked upon it in the light of an affliction.

One of Poe's school-fellows, Colonel J. T. L. Preston, now or late of the Virginia Military Institute, says that Poe was among the first in the school in Latin exercises, and that he excelled in "capping verses"—an exercise which is so obsolete in this country that he explains it. "Before the close of the school all the Latinists, without regard to age or advancement in the language, were drawn up in a line for 'capping verses'; just as in the old-fashioned schools all scholars had to take their place in the spelling-line before dismissal. At the head of the line stood the best scholar, who gave from memory some verse of Latin poetry to be 'capped'—that is,

he challenged all the line, to give from memory, another verse beginning with the same initial letter. Whoever was able to do this took the place of the leader, and in his turn propounded another verse, to be capped in a like manner. This was called 'simple capping.' 'Double capping' was more difficult, inasmuch as the responding verse must at once begin and also end with the same letter as the propounded verse." Colonel Preston remembered a "double capping" which was propounded by one of Mr. Clarke's best scholars, who was a formidable rival of Poe—a verse beginning with the letter *d*, and ending with the letter *m*, which passed Poe and other good scholars, until it reached him, a tyro away down the line, and his astonishment when there popped into his head a line of Virgil which fulfilled the difficult conditions, and placed him where he never was before—above Poe, and above the boy who propounded the "double capping" that he had accomplished.

One of Poe's favorite authors while he was at this school was Horace, whose Odes he repeated so often in the hearing of Master Preston that the latter learned by sound the words of many before he understood their meaning. Besides his proficiency in "the pure Latinity of the Augustan age," upon which his master prided himself, he had the reputation of being a good French scholar, as well as the reputation of a poet. He spent much of his time, in school and out, in writing verses, which he used to show his young friend Preston, whose

seat was beside his own, and whose opinion and assistance he sometimes sought.

Poe remained at the academy of Mr. Clarke, until he had completed the lustrum of Mr. William Wilson's imaginary school-days, and when Mr. Clarke removed to Richmond he continued there under his successor, Mr. William Burke. He was so advanced in scholarship that there was no class for him except the highest, and he was still addicted to poetry. His poetic genius had changed since he had filled the manuscript volume which Mr. Allan had shown his old master, and which is said to have consisted chiefly of pieces addressed to different little girls in Richmond who had from time to time engaged his childish affections—for he had now become a satirist. Ovid had ripened into Juvenal, and his little lash was much applauded by Mr. Allan, who was in a fair way to spoil the clever boy whom he had adopted.

It is difficult at this late day to evolve a consistent character of young Edgar Allan Poe from the contradictory impressions of his contemporaries. They agree that he was a handsome lad, with bright eyes, soft, clustering hair, and a face alive with expression. His figure was slight, but he was well-made, active, sinewy, and graceful. Mr. Preston recalls that he was a swift runner, a wonderful leaper, and something of a boxer. None of his schoolfellows would dare as much as he in the rapids of James River, and his feat of swimming in it a distance of six or seven miles against a tide running two or three miles an

hour was long remembered by those who witnessed it. He had a decided talent for extemporaneous story-telling, and was fond of declamation, his favorite "piece" being the part of *Cassius* in the dialogue between *Brutus* and *Cassius*, in the second scene of the first act of "Julius Cæsar." He was conscious that he possessed talents, and was not averse to displaying them—few clever boys are. His self-esteem could not have endeared him to his companions. He was very tenacious of his views, Mr. Clarke says, in any difference of opinion which arose between him and them, and would not yield until his judgment was convinced; at the same time he was so just that he was a general favorite. Mr. Preston says, on the contrary, that he was self-willed, capricious, inclined to be imperious, and, though of generous impulses, not steadily kind, or even amiable, and so what he exacted was refused to him. He says further, that in the Richmond of that day, which was one of the most aristocratic cities on this side of the Atlantic, boys bore about the odor of their father's notions, good or bad, and that the knowledge that Poe's parents were players, and that he was dependent on the bounty of Mr. Allan, made them decline his leadership, and probably gave him a fierceness that he would not otherwise have had. The indulgence which Mr. and Mrs. Allan lavished upon him was not approved of by their acquaintances, who saw him with other eyes than theirs, and, comparing him with their own darlings, declared that he was a very bad boy. If

the best of men had not suffered under similar imputations when they were boys, we might perhaps allow ourselves to be influenced by the opinion of Poe's elderly contemporaries; but experience has taught us in the long run that boys are very much alike, and our sympathies are rather with those who are considered wild than with the faultless ideals of goody stories. We do not believe therefore that Master Edgar Allan Poe was worse than other boys of his age.

Among the anecdotes of his early life, which are neither numerous nor important, there is one which endows him with more sensibility than he is usually credited with. It concerns his affection for the mother of one of his schoolfellows, Mrs. Helen Stannard, who took him by the hand when her son brought him to her house for the first time, and spoke to him in the most winning manner. He was so penetrated by her kindness that he was deprived of the power of speech, almost of consciousness, and he returned home in a dream, with but one thought, one hope in life —to hear again the sweet and gracious words that had made the desolate world so beautiful to him, and filled his lonely heart with the oppression of a new joy. She became the confidante of all his boyish sorrows, and hers was the one redeeming influence that saved and guided him in the earlier days of his turbulent and passionate youth. After the visitation of strange and peculiar sorrows she died, and for months after her decease it was his habit to visit nightly the cemetery where she was buried;

and when the nights were dreary and cold—when the autumnal rains fell and the winds wailed mournfully over the graves, he lingered longest, and came away most regretfully. I give this anecdote as I find it, substantially in the language of its first narrator, who has cast over it the glamour of sympathy and genius. That it describes, in an exaggerated way, a real incident, I see no reason to doubt, nor that Mrs Stannard may not have indirectly suggested, at a later period, the lines, "To Helen."

We touch firm ground again in the winter of 1826, when we find Edgar Allan Poe at the University of Virginia at Charlottesville. He signed the matriculation book on the 14th of February, five days before his seventeenth birthday, and entered the schools of ancient and modern languages. He was tolerably regular in his attendance, and was a successful student, especially in Latin and French, in which he had been well grounded at the Richmond academy, and in which he obtained distinction at the final examination at the close of the session. He also belonged to the Italian class, the master of which requested its members on one occasion to turn into English verse a portion of the lesson in Tasso which he assigned for the next lecture. He did not require this as a regular class exercise, but recommended it as one that would be likely to benefit them. His recommendation was unheeded, except by Poe, who at the next lecture was highly complimented for his voluntary performance.

We have a glimpse of him at this time, as it lingered in

the memory of one of his fellow-students thirty-four years later They had spent the evening at a private house in Charlottesville, and when it was finished he was invited by Poe into his room. It was a cold night in December, and the fire was nearly gone out. It was soon rekindled by the aid of some candles and the wreck of a table, and by its comfortable blaze they passed a pleasant hour. Poe spoke with regret of the money that he had wasted, and of the debts that he had incurred, which he estimated at two thousand dollars. They were mostly gambling debts, and he declared that he was in honor bound to pay every cent of them at the earliest opportunity. He had an ungovernable passion for cards, but did not appear to be addicted to drinking. At any rate he escaped suspicion, and had the reputation of being a sober, quiet, orderly young gentleman. The session closed on the 15th of December, and with the highest honor that he could receive from the University, which had then made no provisions for conferring degrees of any kind, he returned to Richmond.

I have confined myself so far to what appear to me the facts of Poe's early life, separating them as well as I could from the fancies with which they have been overlaid. I come now to a period which has been slurred over by his biographers, and concerning which I can merely state probabilities. They are—that a stormy scene occurred between him and Mr. Allan after he had left Charlottesville; that he paid the debts which he had contracted

there; and that he continued to bestow his affections upon him. The lad had been rather wild, it is true, but not more so than other lads of his age. His adopted father was rich, and he had a right to consider himself his heir, and to spend money accordingly. Such I conceive to have been his reasoning, and such was certainly his practice. "Mr. Gilliet," said Mrs. Allan one day to a visitor, "what *do* you think of Edgar? His father has just paid an enormous sum for his debts at Charlottesville, and now here is a bill for quantities of champagne, and seventeen broadcloth coats which he has gambled away." "Yes," answered the wilful boy; "I went to see how much of the old man's money I could spend, and I have done it." It was not a pleasant reply for the young prodigal to make, nor for his adopted mother to hear; but it was probably uttered in a spirit of bravado, which she understood and forgave. There can be no doubt but that she and her husband were really attached to him, and that the latter admired his brilliant parts. He had been so taken with his boyish verse that he was induced at one time to publish a volume of it; and he retained this inclination, which he now proceeded to carry out. Its result was a booklet, which was printed in Boston, and suppressed before publication. This work, which I have not seen, is said to have borne the title of "Tamerlane and Other Poems," and the date of 1827, and to have consisted of forty pages. "Tamerlane" occupied seventeen of these pages, the remaining twenty-three being

filled with the "other poems," which were nine in number. The object of the writer of "Tamerlane" was to expose the folly of even *risking* the best feelings of the heart at the shrine of Ambition. He was conscious of many faults, which he flattered himself he could, with little trouble, have corrected; but, unlike many of his predecessors, he had been too fond of his early productions to amend them in his old age. He would not say that he was indifferent to the success of those poems—it might stimulate him to other efforts,—but he could safely assert that failure would not at all influence him in a resolution already adopted. "This is challenging criticism: let it be so. *Nos hæc novimus esse nihil.*"

If the volume was chiefly written in the years 1821–2 (as it purports to have been in the Preface), it was a clever production for a boy of twelve or thirteen. That he had read the narrative poems of Byron, and had caught their movement and their rhetoric, was evident in "Tamerlane," and the misanthropic influence was perceptible in some of the smaller pieces, which were overshadowed by imaginary sorrows. It is reflected, I think, in this little poem, which bears the significant title of "Imitation."

"A dark unfathomed tide
Of interminable pride—
A mystery and a dream
Should my early life seem
I say that dream was fraught
With a wild and waking thought
Of beings that have been,
Which my spirit hath not seen

Had I let them pass me by
With a dreaming eye !
Let none of earth inherit
That vision of my spirit ;
Those thoughts I would control,
As a spell upon his soul :
For that bright hope at last
And that light time have past,
And my worldly rest hath gone
With a sigh as it passed on :
I care not though it perish
With a thought I then did cherish."

There was also, I think, a Byronic inspiration in these stanzas, which were printed without a heading :

" The happiest day—the happiest hour
My seared and blighted heart hath known,
The highest hope of pride and power,
I feel hath flown.

Of power ! said I ? yes ! such I ween ;
But they have vanished long, alas !
The visions of my youth have been—
But let them pass.

And, pride, what have I now with thee ?
Another brow may ev'n inherit
The venom thou hast poured on me—
Be still, my spirit.

The happiest day—the happiest hour
Mine eyes shall see—have ever seen,
The brightest glance of pride and power
I feel—have been ;

But were that hope of pride and power
Now offered with the pain
Ev'n *then* I felt—that brightest hour
I would not live again :

For on its wing was dark alloy,
And as it fluttered, fell
An essence, powerful to destroy
A soul that knew it well."

As I have not seen the volume from which these extracts are quoted, I am not able to compare the version of "Tamerlane," with which it opens, with the versions of that poem in the later editions of Poe's writings, further than to say that it differs largely from them, and is more loosely versified. How the young poet came to select this grim old Tartar conqueror for a hero, can only be conjectured; if the poem was written at a later period than the date given in the Preface (1821–2), I should say that he might have been suggested to him by a passage in Byron's "Deformed Transformed." It falls from the lips of the hunchback when the stranger offers him beauty and strength:

"I ask not
For valor, since deformity is daring.
It is its essence to o'ertake mankind
By heart and soul, and make itself the equal—
Ay, the superior of the rest. There is
A spur in its halt movements, to become
All that the others cannot, in such things
As still are free to both, to compensate
For stepdame Nature's avarice at first.
They woo with fearless deeds the smiles of fortune,
And oft, like Timour the lame Tartar, win them."

If Poe's first volume had been published, instead of being suppressed, it would not, I think, have attracted much attention. It was imitative, as I have said, and it

was crude and misanthropic. It would have been indifferent reading after "The Buccaneer" of Mr. Richard Henry Dana, which was published in the same year, and after the dozen or more of fugitive pieces which Mr. Henry W. Longfellow had published in the *United States Literary Gazette* about two years before. If the reader is inclined to compare the early poems of Poe with those of Longfellow, he has but to read the two of the former quoted above, and turn to five of the latter, which he will find in the "Voices of the Night," and draw his own conclusions. There was no appreciable difference in the worldly circumstances of the two young poets, which were comfortable, and a difference of less than two years in their respective ages, the difference being in favor of Mr. Longfellow.

Poe's relations with his adopted parents must have been pleasant at this time, or he could not have printed his volume of juvenile verse, the expenses of which were undoubtedly borne by Mr. Allan; and they appear to have continued so a year or two longer. His social position was a passport to the best society in Richmond; his person was agreeable, his manners good, and his talents undeniable. He had a large acquaintance among the young gentlemen of the town, many of whom had been his school-fellows a few years before, and an acquaintance (large or otherwise) among the young ladies. He had been attached to one of the latter, a Miss Royster, who was a year or two younger than he, and whose parents lived

opposite the house of the Allans, and had written to her frequently from Charlottesville. Her father had intercepted the letters, however, ostensibly because the young people were too young for lovers, but really, it would seem, because he had fixed upon another as a more desirable son-in-law than Master Edgar. Miss Royster, whose Christian name was Elmira, or Sarah, or perhaps both, was married when she was seventeen to a Mr. Shelton, and her early lover was left to his own devices.

There is a blank in the life of Poe from this time till late in 1828, or early in 1829, when we find him in Baltimore. Whether he was there because the Allans were estranged from him, or because he was visiting his relatives, we can only conjecture. It can hardly have been for the former reason, I think, for he had in press a second volume of poems, which we cannot suppose any publisher rash enough to bring out at his own risk, and which it is safe to assume was paid for by Mr. Allan, as the suppressed Boston booklet had been. Here he made the acquaintance of his father's sister, Maria, the wife of Mr. William Clemm, who was teaching school; of her daughter, Virginia, a delicate girl of six or seven; and of other members of his father's family, not forgetting his brother, William Henry. The reputation of this young man was not of the best. He was handsome, and possessed of talents, but of irregular habits. He had disappointed by his habits a lady to whom he had been engaged, and who had dismissed him; and he cultivated the

Muse by writing Byronic verses, which were printed in a little weekly sheet called *The Minerva.* It was while he was at Baltimore that Poe was overtaken by the first great misfortune of his life. This was the loss of Mrs. Allan, who died at Richmond on the 27th of February, 1829, and was buried before he could be present at her funeral. If he quitted Baltimore for that purpose, he soon returned, and devoted himself to correcting his proofs.

Poe's second volume, "Al Aaraaf, Tamerlane, and Minor Poems" (Hatch & Dunning), was published at Baltimore in 1829. It contained fifty pages of verse, but by the insertion of blank, or partially blank, leaves it was spaced out to seventy-two pages, which were tolerably printed on good paper. It opened with a nameless sonnet, since addressed "To Science," which was followed by "Al Aaraaf" and "Tamerlane." An advertisement of two lines prefixed to the latter informed the reader that it was printed in Boston two years before, but suppressed through circumstances of a private nature ; and on a displayed page opposite it was respectfully dedicated to John Neal. The minor poems, or miscellaneous poems, as they were re-christened on the fly-leaf before them, were ten in number. First came a "Preface" of twenty-one lines, which was followed by three poems of a personal character, each inscribed "To —— ——." The first consisted of forty lines, the second of four four-line stanzas, and the third of three four-line stanzas. The per-

sonal character assumed in these pieces was continued in fourteen lines, "To the River ——," but lost in the next twenty-three lines, "The Lake ——. To ——." A darker mood succeeded in twenty-eight lines, entitled "Spirits of the Dead." Personal assumption inspired "A Dream," which extended to four four-line stanzas, and "To M——," which extended to five stanzas of the same length. The volume concluded with forty-six lines on "Fairy Land." The introductory sonnet ("Science! meet daughter of old Time thou art") was published substantially as it stands in the later editions, as was also "Al Aaraaf" and "Tamerlane." I have not seen the first version of the last in its entirety, so I am not able, as I have already said, to compare it with the second version; but, judging from the extracts from it which I have seen, I should say that it was largely rewritten, considerably shortened, and very much improved. I perceive the movement of Byron's narrative poetry more strongly in the amended than in the original version of this poem, and if there was any doubt about Poe's having read "The Deformed Transformed" before he wrote it, there is no doubt, I think, that he read it before he wrote "Al Aaraaf," for the melodious measure of the song of the soldiers in the second scene of that striking drama is exactly reproduced in the song of the maiden in the second part of the poem. A short extract from each may interest the admirers of Byron and Poe.

Thus Byron, in 1821:

" The black bands came over
The Alps and their snow ;
With Bourbon, the rover,
They pass'd the broad Po.
We have beaten all foemen,
We have captured a king,
We have turned back on no men,
And so let us sing.

And thus Poe, in 1829:

" 'Neath the bluebell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray,
That keeps, from the dreamer,
The moonbeam away—
Bright beings that ponder
With half-closing eyes,
On the stars which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
Come down on your brow
Like—eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now."

Poe declared in a note that the rhyme in one of the verses of this song had an appearance of affectation, and admitted that it was imitated from Scott, or rather from Claude Halcro, in whose mouth he admired its effect. He referred to the song entitled " Mary" (" Farewell to Northmaven "), in the twelfth chapter of " The Pirate," which was written in the same year as the " The Deformed Transformed."

To return, however, to the bibliography of Poe's second volume. The " Preface " before the miscellaneous poems appears in the later editions under the title of " Romance," as well as the second and third of the three

personal poems ("I saw thee on thy bridal day," and "The bowers whereat, in dreams I see"), the former being now a "Song." "To the River ——" and "The Lake. To ——," have come down to us with a few verbal alterations, and we have "A Dream" ("In visions of the dark night") as it was originally printed. The five four-line stanzas, "To M——," have dwindled down to a single eight-line stanza, beginning, "I heed not that my earthly lot"; but "Fairy Land" remains unchanged. "Spirits of the Dead," is a corrected copy of a poem of the same length printed in the Boston edition, where it was entitled "Visit of the Dead," and the first of the personal poems, "To —— ——" ("Should my early life seem"), is somewhat based upon the "Imitation" in the Boston edition already quoted. As I shall have occasion to speak of this last poem hereafter, I will conclude the bibliographical analysis of this volume by copying the stanzas "To M——."

"O! I care not that my earthly lot
Hath—little of Earth in it—
The years of love have been forgot
In the fever of a minute.

I heed not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I—
But that *you* meddle with *my* fate
Who am a passer-by—

It is not that my founts of bliss
Are gushing—strange! with tears—
Or that the thrill of a single kiss
Hath palsied many years—

'T is not that the flowers of twenty springs
  Which have withered as they rose
Lie dead on my heart-strings
  With the weight of an age of snows—

Nor that the grass—O ! may it thrive !
  On my grave is growing or grown—
But that, while I am dead yet alive,
  I cannot be, lady, alone."

What reception this little volume met with we are not informed, but it could not have been a warm one. There was no literary criticism to speak of in the country fifty years ago—at any rate, there was no recognized literary authority, except the *North American Review*, which occupied itself with graver considerations than are usually bestowed upon volumes of juvenile verse by unknown authors ; and there was but one paper in Baltimore which made any pretension to literature. This was *The Minerva*, to which William Henry Poe was an occasional contributor, and which is said to have handled his brother Edgar Allan rather roughly. It was not a remarkable book that this young gentleman had produced, and he would have been an acute as well as a good-natured critic who could have seen much promise in it. The writer could hardly be said to be imitative, and could hardly be said to be original : style or manner there was none. "Al Aaraaf" is a boy's poem, ambitious but uninteresting ; and "Tamerlane" is defective, as a whole, in that it gives no clear idea of the life and character of its hero, though it is not without spirit in parts. The best of the minor poems is

"Fairy Land," which is at once melodious and suggestive. If it were possible to separate the real from the assumed personality of the part, I should say that the former colored the second of the two poems addressed "To ——" ("I saw thee on thy bridal day"), and that it commemorated the marriage of Miss Royster.

Belonging to this period of Poe's life is a short poem not hitherto included in his Poetical Works. It was first published in fac-simile in *Scribner's Magazine* for September, 1875, and purports to have been written at Baltimore, March 17, 1829, and to be entitled "Alone." I say purports, for the title, the locality, and the date are certainly not in the hand-writing of Poe, which is rather unskilfully imitated. That the poem is his, however, there is no doubt, and that it was written about the time in question. I give it as I find it, leaving the reader to punctuate it, if he can.

"From childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring—
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow—I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone—
And all I lov'd—*I* loved alone—
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From every depth of good & ill
The mystery which binds me still
From the torrent, or the fountain—
From the red cliff of the mountain—
From the sun that 'round me roll'd

In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder, & the storm—
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view—"

If I were capable of writing Imaginary Biographies, like Sir Egerton Brydges, or Imaginary Conversations, like Walter Savage Landor, I could fill the interval between the publication of Poe's second volume in 1829, and his entrance to West Point in 1830, with greater circumstantiality than I can now pretend to. As this delightful talent has been denied me, however, I can only state the probable events of this interval, which are that Poe returned to Richmond and the house of his adopted father, which had been so lately darkened by death; that he passed his days among young men of his own age and station, and his evenings in visiting ladies of his acquaintance; and that his future was a subject of serious consideration—if not with him, at least with Mr. Allan. What shall I do with this young man? was a question which that gentleman could not shirk, and which he had no right to shirk. He had taken him into his house when a child, and if his affection had not spoiled, it had gone nigh to spoil him. He had him educated by the best masters in Richmond, and had sent him to college, where he had had his fling. He was a handsome fellow, with fine talents, but he was not grateful, and not considerate.

Still, he must be provided for, and soon. He was no longer a boy, but was old enough to choose a profession. What profession should it be? It is not to draw upon one's imagination very largely to say that some such thought as this passed through the mind of Mr. Allan, and that the result of it was impressed upon the mind of Poe. He chose the profession of arms: interest was made by Mr. Allan, and backed by the influence of Chief Justice Marshall, General Scott, and John Randolph, he received the appointment of a cadet, and in the summer of 1830 went to West Point.

The half century which has passed since Poe was at West Point has not obliterated his career from the memory of his fellow-cadets. They remember him for his talents and for his idleness. "I doubt if he ever studied a page of Lacroix," one of them wrote in 1867, "unless it was to glance hastily over it in the lecture-room while others of his section were reciting. It was evident from the first that he had no intention of going through with the course, and both the professors and cadets of the older classes set him down for a 'January colt' before the corps had been in barracks a week." His room (No. 28 South Barracks) was generally regarded as a hard room. "Cadets who aspired to high standing on the merit-roll were not much given to visiting it, at least in daytime. To compensate in some measure for this neglect, however, the inspecting officer was uncommonly punctual in his visits, and rarely failed to find some subject for his daily

report of demerit." Poe turned his talent for versifying to the manufacture of local squibs, one of which embraced all the officers of the Academy, including this obnoxious inspecting officer, who is thus immortalized:

"John Locke was a very great name;
Joe Locke was a greater in short;
The former was well known to Fame,
The latter well known to Report."

That he was a critic as well as a poet was evident to the cadet from whom I am quoting, and who was an occupant with him of the much-reported room. "The first conversation I had with Poe after we became installed as roommates was characteristic of the man. A volume of Campbell's poems was lying upon my table, and he tossed it contemptuously aside, with the curt remark, 'Campbell is a plagiarist'; then, without waiting for a reply, he picked up the book, and turned the leaves over rapidly until he found the passage he was looking for. 'There,' said he, 'is a line more quoted than any other passage of his: "Like angel visits, few and far between," and he stole it bodily from Blair's Grave. Not satisfied with the theft, he has spoiled it in the effort to disguise it. Blair wrote, "Like angel visits, *short* and far between." Campbell's "few and far between" is mere tautology.'" If our military reminiscent had been more literary than he was he would have known that the charge of plagiarism which Poe brought against Campbell was an old one; and if Poe himself had been a greater reader than he was, he could

have brought the charge of plagiarism against Blair as well as against Campbell. If he had read the "Miscellanies of Norris of Bemerton," for example, he would have remembered, I think, to quote a stanza from a poem therein entitled "The Parting," as the original of both.

> "How fading are the joys we doat upon,
> Like apparitions seen and gone;
> But those which soonest take their flight
> Are the most exquisite and strong.
> Like angel visits, short and bright,
> Mortality 's too weak to bear them long."

Accusations of plagiarism against writers of eminence, which are frequently mistaken for evidence of acute critical power, were Poe's strong, or weak, point at West Point. "The whole bent of his mind at that time seemed to be toward criticism,—or, more properly speaking, cavilling. Whether it was Shakespeare or Byron, Addison or Johnson—the acknowledged classic or the latest poetaster —all came in alike for his critical censure. He seemed to take especial delight in cavilling at passages that had received the most unequivocal stamp of general approval. I never heard him speak in terms of praise of any English writer, living or dead."

Poe was now in his twenty-second year, but he appeared much older, and had a worn, weary, and discontented look. His aged appearance was accounted for by a report that he had procured a cadet's appointment for his son, and that on the death of the boy he had substituted himself in his place. It was not a brilliant joke, but

it annoyed him, for he was not largely gifted with a sense of humor. He was rather pleased, however, with another report, which was based upon a knowledge of his parentage, and which one would think would have offended him seriously. It was that he was a grandson of Benedict Arnold,— a saturnine fancy which has since found its way into print as a fact.

It was not a good school in which he found himself, though he might have made it such, if he had only been industrious and prudent. Hundreds of young men have gone to West Point, with no greater temptations than his; have yielded to their temptations, as he did; and have come out triumphantly. Unfortunately for him, he was not of the number. He was idle, he was lawless, and he drank. He had not profited by his experience at the University, except that he had given up gaming, and had exchanged champagne for brandy. His room was seldom without a bottle of it—a circumstance which was known to his bibulous fellow-cadets, and of which they used to avail themselves, for when their own bottles were emptied, they stole into the room between tattoo and taps, and sampled the ebbing supply. It was smuggled in from Benny Haven's—a feat which demanded address, in that it had to be accomplished without detection, and the possession of certain moneys, or their equivalent in salable commodities—blankets, candles, and what not.

The prognostications of Poe's tutors were fulfilled on the 7th of January, 1831, when the "January colt" was

roughly curried down. He was brought before a general court-martial on that day, and was charged with gross neglect of all duties and disobedience of orders, the specifications setting forth time and place. He pleaded guilty to both charges, and was sentenced to be dismissed the service of the United States, which sentence was afterward approved at the War Department, and carried into effect on the 6th of March.

Poe's next step, after his expulsion from West Point, was not, I think, in the direction of Richmond, which he could hardly have been impatient to revisit, or only so far in that direction as New York, where he made his second serious attempt at authorship, and his first serious attempt to earn money by literature. The poetic reputation which he had acquired at West Point now stood him in good stead, for it led him to announce the publication of a volume of his poems by subscription. Permission to subscribe was granted to the cadets, and as no cadet was ever known to neglect any opportunity of spending his pay, the subscription was nearly universal. They had admired the effusion of their late comrade, and seeing that his lines had not fallen in pleasant places, they were willing to aid him to the extent of two dollars and a half each. They were disappointed, however, when they received his volume, for instead of the satires and squibs which they had expected, they found that they had been imposed upon with poetry! They were disgusted, so much so that for months afterward the standing material of their jests consisted of quotations from this expensive little book.

It was published by Mr. Elam Bliss, a well-known publisher of New York, who had had the sagacity to detect the drift of the popular current toward Annuals, as well as the enterprise to supply it before it was exhausted, and who had issued for three years in succession (1827–28–29) one of the best—if not best American contribution to this ephemeral branch of literature. This was "The Talisman," which was edited and furnished by three eminent hands (to adopt the nomenclature of Tonson and Lintot), Mr. Gulian G. Verplanck, Mr. Robert C. Sands, and Mr. William Cullen Bryant. The last two enjoyed a high reputation as journalists, the former being one of the editors of the *Commercial Advertiser*, the latter one of the editors of the *Evening Post*. Mr. Bryant stood by common consent at the head of all the American poets; and while Mr. Edgar Allan Poe was seeing his little book through the press, he was preparing a volume which should contain all the poems that he had hitherto written, and which was published by Mr. Bliss in the following year. The literary market was not very active. The most famous American author, Mr. Washington Irving, who had been abroad about fifteen years, was enjoying his laurels in London; Mr. N. P. Willis, who had made a sensation by his Scriptural poems, and was one of the editors of the *New York Mirror*, had sailed for Europe in order to correspond with that elegant journal; Mr. Nathaniel Hawthorne, who had published an anonymous prose romance three years before, was dreaming at Salem,

and writing tales for "The Token," an Annual which had been started in Boston by Mr. S. G. Goodrich, a year after "The Talisman." Mr. Goodrich was seeking contributions for his Annual, and manufacturing books for the young under the *nom de plume* of Peter Parley; the Reverend John Pierpont had hung up his lyre, and was preaching in the Hollis Street Unitarian Church in Boston; Mr. J. G. Whittier, who had recently edited the *New England Weekly Review* in Hartford, and written a life of his poetic friend Brainard, was rusticating and farming at Haverhill; Mr. Oliver Wendell Holmes was studying medicine at Cambridge; Mr. Park Benjamin was studying law at the same place; Mr. H. W. Longfellow was Professor of Modern Languages in Bowdoin College; and Mr. Sumner Lincoln Fairfield was resting on his oars, after struggling through his delugic epic, "The Spirit of Destruction." There was room for a new poet.

Poe's third book was published, as I have said, by Mr. Elam Bliss, in 1831. It was entitled, "Poems, by Edgar A. Poe," and it purported to be—what, strictly speaking, it was not—a second edition. It bore on the title-page, in small capitals, the following motto: "Tout le monde a raison—Rochefoucault," and was dedicated on the fifth page "To the U. S. Corps of Cadets." The seventh page was devoted to the contents, viz.: "Dedication," "Letter to Mr. ——," "Introduction," "To Helen," "Israfel," "The Doomed City," "Fairy Land," "Irene," "A Pæan," "The Valley Nis," "Al Aaraaf," and "Tamer-

lane." There was a rivulet of text in a meadow of margin on the eleventh page, the text being four lines from the famous old poem, "The Lie," which has been variously attributed to Sylvester, Davison, and Raleigh, and which is here ascribed unhesitatingly to the last:

> "Tell wit how much it wrangles,
> In fickle points of niceness—
> Tell wisdom it entangles
> Itself in overwiseness."

"Letter to Mr. —— ——," is dated "West Point, ——, 1831, and addressed to "Dear B——." It begins on the thirteenth and ends on the twenty-ninth page. "Introduction" begins on the thirty-third and ends on the thirty-sixth page. "To Helen" occupies the thirty-ninth page. "Israfel" begins on the forty-third and ends on the forty-fifth page. "The Doomed City" begins on the forty-ninth and ends on the fifty-first page. "Fairy Land" begins on the fifty-fifth and ends on the fifty-eighth page. "Irene" begins on the sixty-first and ends on the sixty-fourth page. "A Pæan" begins on the sixty-seventh and ends on the seventieth page. "The Valley Nis" begins on the seventy-third and ends on the seventy-fifth page. "Al Aaraaf" begins on the eighty-third and ends on the one hundred and eighth page; and "Tamerlane" begins on the one hundred and eleventh and ends on the one hundred and twenty-fourth page. The spacing of this booklet was liberal, so very liberal, indeed, that if its blank and half blank pages, extra titles, and interleaves,

and so on, were thrown out, it would be reduced to about eighty pages. It contained eleven hundred and thirteen lines of verse, which was only one hundred and ninety-six lines more than were in Poe's second volume, which was published two years before, and was here partially reprinted. The "Preface" of this volume, which, for example, originally consisted of twenty-three lines, was extended to sixty-six lines, and rechristened "Introduction," and "Fairy Land," which consisted of forty-six lines, was extended to sixty-four lines, forty-eight of which were added to the first version, of which only sixteen lines were retained. The poetic character of this last poem was entirely changed during its revision, the rambling hints of elfin scenery which were its *motif* dwindling away before a rambling description of a maiden in the moonlight. This description tickled the fancy of some of the young gentlemen to whom the volume was dedicated, one of whom was able to recall some lines of it with tolerable accuracy after a lapse of forty years.

There was a difference of fourteen lines between the first and second versions of "Al Aaraaf," the difference being an addition to the latter, at the commencement of the poem, where the first fifteen lines of the former version were replaced by twenty-nine new lines, which could hardly be said to be an improvement. There was also a difference of nine lines between the first and second versions of "Tamerlane," the difference in this case being also in favor of the latter, in which there were numerous

changes, consisting of suppressions and additions. The most important of the additions was the insertion between the seventh and eighth stanzas of twenty-one of the twenty-three lines entitled, "The Lake. To ——," and a second conclusion to the poem, consisting of fourteen lines taken from "To —— ——," the first of the personal poems in the second volume. The only portion of Poe's third volume which had never been in print before, and which might therefore be considered *new*, were the poems entitled, "To Helen," "Israfel," "The Doomed City," "Irene," "A Pæan," and "The Valley Nis," which contained altogether just two hundred and eighty-one lines.

"To Helen" is the poem which is said to have been suggested by Mrs. Helen Stannard, the mother of one of of Poe's early school-fellows, who had such an influence over him, and over whose grave he used to linger in the windy and rainy nights of autumn, and a very curious poem it is, all things considered. It stands as in the later editions of his Poetical Works, except that the fourth and fifth lines of the second stanza, which now read,

> "To the glory that was Greece,
> And the grandeur that was Rome."

originally ran,

> "To the beauty of fair Greece,
> And the grandeur of old Rome."

"Israfel," which consisted of forty-four lines, is substantially the same as the revised version of that poem, which consists of fifty-one lines; "The Doomed City,"

which consisted of fifty-eight lines, is substantially the same as "The City in the Sea," which consists of fifty-three lines; "Irene," which consisted of seventy-four lines, is the first draft of the poem now called "The Sleeper," which consists of sixty-one lines; "A Pæan," which consisted of forty-four lines (eleven four-line stanzas, in short lines), is the first draft of the poem now called "Lenore," which consists of twenty-six lines (four stanzas of irregular length, in long lines); and "The Valley Nis," which consisted of forty-four lines, is the first draft of the poem now called "The Valley of Unrest," which consists of twenty-seven lines.

I have devoted considerable space to Poe's early volumes (which have become scarce), partly to add my mite to American bibliography, and partly to enable the reader to compare them with what purports to be a reprint of them in the collected edition of Poe's Works, where they are stated to be printed *verbatim*—without alteration from the original edition. The alterations which really exist, and which I have in a measure indicated, are curious as evidences of an intellectual activity that alternated between dissatisfaction and complacency, and that was as tenacious of first impressions as if they were the last it was ever to have. They betray a want of confidence on the part of the writer, who has not convinced himself that his mind is a fertile one, however much he may have tried to, but who more than suspects it is a sterile one. He hoards up the smallest coin, not because he is rich, or

likely to be, but because he is poor, and may be poorer. The interval of two years between the publication of these volumes was not so remarkable for productivity as noticeable for the value of what it produced. It witnessed a growth of mental power, an enlargement of poetic intuition, and a diminution of morbid personality. It developed an objective element, as in "The Valley Nis" "A Pæan," "Irene," "The Doomed City," and the exquisite lines "To Helen," of which any poet might be proud; it increased the imaginative faculty of the poet, and testified to his originality. If he was influenced by other poets, it is not impossible, I think, to detect their influence. He was certainly not influenced by the poets of his own land, who were little besides imitators of two of the most prominent of their number, Bryant and Willis. There is not a line in his verse which suggests even remotely the Nature-worship and the meditative gravity of the first, or the ornate descriptive talent of the last.

If Poe's third volume found many readers other than those who had so confidingly subscribed for it, it does not seem to have found one who read it with any critical sagacity, or dreamed that in its writer a new poet had appeared. The prefatory letter, addressed to "Dear B——" (who was understood to be Bulwer), was not calculated to beget consideration. It was flippant, confident, opinionated, destructive. There was offence in the opening paragraph, which referred to a former volume (the existence of which the reader would have to take on trust),

a portion of which was believed to be worthy of a second edition; and a greater offence in the declaration that no good criticism of a poem could be written by one who was not a poet himself. It was a vulgar error that a poet could not form a correct estimate of his own writings. It was true that a bad poet would make a false critic, and his self-love would blind his little judgment in his favor; but a poet, who was indeed a poet, could not fail of making a just critic. "Whatever should be deducted on the score of self-love might be replaced on account of his intimate acquaintance with the subject; in short, we have more instances of false criticism than of just, where one's own writings are the test, simply because we have more bad poets than good. There are, of course, many objections to what I say: Milton is a great example of the contrary; but his opinion with respect to the Paradise Regained is by no means fully ascertained. By what trivial circumstances men are often led to assert what they do not really believe! Perhaps an inadvertent word has descended to posterity. But, in fact, the Paradise Regained is little, if at all, inferior to the Paradise Lost, and is only supposed so to be because men do not like epics, whatever they may say to the contrary, and, reading those of Milton in their natural order, are too much wearied with the first to derive any pleasure from the second. I dare say Milton preferred Comus to either—if so, justly." After setting the world right about epics, the young iconoclast proceeds to assail the Lake School, and to demolish

Wordsworth. "As to Wordsworth, I have no faith in him. That he had in youth the feelings of a poet I believe, for there are glimpses of extreme delicacy in his writings (and delicacy is the poet's own kingdom, his *El Dorado*), but they have the appearance of a better day recollected; and glimpses, at best, are little evidence of present poetic fire—we know that a few straggling flowers spring up daily in the crevices of an avalanche. He was to blame in wearing away his youth in contemplation with the end of poetizing in his manhood. With the increase of his judgment the light which should make it apparent has faded away. His judgment consequently is too correct. This may not be understood, but the old Goths of Germany would have understood it, who used to debate matters of importance to their State twice, once when drunk, and once when sober—sober, that they might not be deficient in formality—drunk, lest they should be destitute of vigor." His judgment of Coleridge is more favorable and more just. "Of Coleridge I cannot speak but with reverence. His towering intellect! his gigantic power! To use an author quoted by himself, 'J'ai trouve souvent que la plupart des sects ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce quelles avancent, mais non pas en se quelles nient,' and, to employ his own language, he has imprisoned his conceptions by the barrier he has erected against those of others. It is lamentable to think that such a mind should be buried in metaphysics, and, like the Nyctanthes, waste its perfume upon the night alone. In

reading that man's poetry I tremble, like one who stands upon a volcano, conscious, from the very darkness bursting from the crater, of the fire and the light that are weltering below!" He sums up what he not inaptly calls his long rigmarole with a definition of poetry. "A poem, in my opinion, is opposed to a work of science by having, for its *immediate* object pleasure, not truth; to romance, by having for its object an *indefinite*, instead of a *definite* pleasure, being a poem only so far as this object is attained: romance presenting perceptible images with definite, poetry with *in*definite sensations, to which end music is an *essential*, since the comprehension of sweet sound is our most indefinite conception. Music, when combined with a pleasurable idea, is poetry; music without the idea is simply music; the idea without the music is prose from its very definitiveness."

If the death of Mrs. Allan had been unfortunate for Poe, the marriage of Mr. Allan to a second wife was equally so. Precisely when it occurred no one seems to know. If within a year after the death of Mrs. Allan, as it has been stated lately, it was some months before Poe went to West Point, and it might have had something to do with his going there. There is no good reason, however, for believing that the funeral baked meats did coldly furnish forth the marriage supper; but, on the contrary, that sufficient time elapsed for them to be nicely warmed over. I am inclined to think that they were partaken of while Poe was at West Point, and that they were

any thing but a savory morsel to him. But however this may be, married Mr. Allan was to a Miss Patterson, whose Christian name was Louise Gabrielle, who was reputed beautiful, and who was younger than himself. The marriage was a blow to Poe, who could not but feel that the hold he had had upon Mr. Allan was weakened, and liable at any moment to be broken. He was not endeared to him by his extravagance at college and his conduct at West Point; he had no right to expect a continuance of affection from him, and the most that he could hope for was forgiveness. Brought up to consider himself as his heir, it was natural that he should resent a marriage which might install another heir in his place. It was natural also that Mr. Allan should resent this resentment, and still more natural that Mrs. Allan should do so. She had no reason to like Mr. Poe. He had never been any thing to her, and but little to her husband, except a trouble and an expense. Given the situation and the characters—a wild, reckless, disappointed young man, and an elderly gentleman with a young wife—what could be looked for but dissensions and heart-burnings and separation? It is not worth while to inquire into the whys and the wherefores: they were human, and they separated. Mrs. Allan was prolific, for she bore three boys, and expeditious, if they were all born before the death of her husband, which is said to have taken place in 1834. They inherited the estate of their father, which was large, but Poe inherited nothing.

From Richmond, to which he appears to have returned after the publication of his third volume of verse, and which he could no longer consider his home, Poe went, as nearly as I can make out, to Baltimore. Where, indeed, could the homeless young man go except to the birthplace of his father and the residence of his relatives? His relatives would do something for him, however little—at any rate they would give him shelter until he could do something for himself. If he had done nothing hitherto, it was because nothing was expected of him. He could write poetry—he had proved that—and, of course, he could write prose, and would do so. Such I conceive to have been the reasoning of Poe when he betook himself to the home of his aunt, Mrs. Clemm, and it must be confessed it was not without force. His circumstances were not more unfavorable than those of many authors had been at the beginning of their career; they might even be said to be favorable, he was so well equipped for the literary profession. He possessed scholarship as well as talents; all that he needed was practice and experience. What direction his first attempts to earn money by writing took we have to conjecture; but it could hardly have been journalism, I think; for what I know of American journalism fifty years ago does not lead me to suppose that he could find any Baltimore editor who was anxious for his contributions, or willing to pay for them. Readers of newspapers were so little exacting that if they had conventional editorials such as

they were accustomed to, and clippings from other newspapers, they were contented. Dismissing journalism, then, as unremunerative, he cast his eye over the field of American prose, and noting the sort of seed that had been cultivated therein with most success, he began to sow the same. The most popular prose writer in America was Irving, and the most popular of all his writings were the stories in the "Sketch-Book" and "Bracebridge Hall," with which he was probably familiar. He would write stories, therefore—not such as Irving had written, and in which there was but little of the creative element, but such as should be characteristic of himself, and should be imaginative. Before coming to this conclusion he had sought a position in a school which had recently been opened at Reisterstown, in Baltimore County, but there was no vacancy in which he could be placed. There was no vacancy anywhere except in literature, where there is always room for a man of genius, and to literature he accordingly turned. He was dependent on the kindness of Mrs. Clemm, who was poor, though he may have been occasionally assisted by his uncles, of whom, I believe, two were in Baltimore, and, possibly, by his brother William Henry—if that eccentric scapegrace was still in the land of the living. His only, or his most literary acquaintance was Mr. L. A. Wilmer, with whom he used to take long walks in the environs of Baltimore, with whom he had long talks about books and authors, and to whom he no doubt read the stories that he was now writing.

Little is known of Mr. Wilmer, who appears to have belonged in a humble way to the great body of American journalists, and in a humbler way to the small band of American authors. The compilers of biographical dictionaries have hitherto omitted his name from the rolls of the illustrious obscure ; he has even escaped the notice of the bibliographers, although one of their number (for such we must perhaps consider the industrious Mr. Allibone, from the nature if not the character of his voluminous work) informs us that he wrote several books, the names of which he specifies and the dates of which he gives. It is to be regretted that our knowledge of Mr. Wilmer consists of a few names and dates, for whatever he was or was not in American literature, he possesses a certain biographical interest as being one of the earliest, if not the earliest, of Poe's literary friends, and of editing the first publication to which he is known to have contributed. This was the *Saturday Visitor*, a weekly paper which was started in Baltimore in 1832, with Mr. Wilmer as its editor. It aimed at amusing its readers with literary productions rather than with the news of the day, and it succeeded so well or so ill in this aim that its proprietors resolved, in the summer or early autumn of 1833, to offer a prize of one hundred dollars for the best prose story that should be offered, and a prize of fifty dollars for the best poem. To insure fairness, as well as to avoid the responsibility of the decision both for themselves and their editor, they persuaded three gentlemen of Baltimore to

act as a committee to award the prizes. Three professions were represented in this committee—medicine, by Dr. James H. Miller; law, by Mr. J. H. B. Latrobe; and literature, by Mr. John P. Kennedy. There was a flutter among the minor literati of America—or such of them as saw the *Saturday Visitor*—for the amounts offered were munificent for the time, and the honor to be obtained considerable. So at least thought Poe, who entered the lists as a competitor for both prizes.

The time set for the reception of manuscripts closed, and the committee met to endure the infliction of reading them, and the opprobrium of deciding which was not the worst. It was an important meeting, so important, indeed, as an epoch in the life of Poe, that one of the committee contrived to remember what occurred at it after a lapse of more than forty years. This was Mr. Latrobe, in the back parlor of whose house they gathered one pleasant afternoon, and seated themselves round a table with their bane and their antidote before them. The bane consisted of the manuscript stories and poems, the antidote of wine and segars. As the host happened to be the youngest, he was requested to open the packages of prose and poetry, and to read their contents to his fellow-sufferers. The first thing that he took from the top of the prose pile was in a woman's hand, and if writing alone could have gained the prize it would probably have gained it, it was so neat and distinct. It was bad, however—so bad that but for its being the

work of a woman its first page would have consigned it to the basket which was placed beside the reader, and into which, after it was read through, he finally tossed it. It was followed by several other stories, which were speedily condemned on their demerits. One or two were laid aside for reconsideration, but they failed to pass muster, and the committee had about made up their minds that there was nothing before them to which they would award a prize, when Mr. Latrobe noticed a small quarto-bound book which had until then accidentally escaped attention, no doubt because it was so externally unlike the bundles of manuscript it had to compete with. He opened it, and saw it was written in Roman characters, instead of the common cursive manuscript, and was entitled "Tales of the Folio Club." He read a page to himself while his colleagues were filling their glasses and lighting their segars (probably not for the first time), and said that it seemed at last as if they had a prospect of awarding the prize. They laughed as if they doubted it, and settled themselves in their easy-chairs as he began to read aloud. It was not long before they were as much interested as he was, and as he read through tale after tale he was only interrupted by their exclamations of surprise and admiration. There was genius in every thing they listened to; there was no uncertain grammar, no feeble phraseology, no ill-placed punctuation, no worn-out truisms, no strong thoughts elaborated into weakness. Logic and imagination were combined in rare consistency; and

the world which the writer sometimes created in his mind was so weird, so strange, and so wonderfully graphic that it seemed for the moment to have all the truth of a reality. There was, besides, an analysis of complicated facts, and an unravelling of circumstantial evidence that attracted Mr. Kennedy and himself, an amount of accurate scientific knowledge that charmed Dr. Miller, and a pure classical diction that delighted all three. Mr. Latrobe discovered these rare intellectual qualities in the tales of Poe (or persuaded himself that he did forty years afterward), and was to be congratulated on the discovery. When the reading was completed, and the general verdict reached, the difficulty of making a choice had still to be met. Portions were read over, and the preference which had once been given to "A Descent into the Maelstrom" was finally bestowed on "A MS. Found in a Bottle." The prize being thus awarded, the sealed envelope which accompanied the book was opened, and the name of its writer ascertained: it was Edgar Allan Poe. Relieved of one of their burdens, the committee again refreshed themselves by refilling their glasses and relighting their segars, and Mr. Latrobe manfully attacked the pile of poetry. It was better, on the whole, than the prose, but still so bad that, after it had all been read, only two pieces were deemed worthy of consideration. One, a small poem in blank verse, entitled "The Coliseum," was at once seen by the handwriting to be the production of the same Edgar Allan Poe; the other,

the title and subject of which have perished, was found, when the envelope which accompanied it was opened, to be the production of Mr. John H. Hewitt, a musical composer of Baltimore. If the committee had not decided upon giving the one-hundred-dollar prize to Poe, they would probably have given him the fifty-dollar prize, but thinking that the excellence of Mr. Hewitt's poem deserved a reward, they concluded to give him the latter. Mr. Latrobe believed that none of the committee had seen Poe when the award was made, and was under the impression that he was the only one of the number who had ever heard his name, which he recalled in connection with a poem which had been shown him by Mr. William Gwynne, and which proved to be a manuscript copy of "Al Aaraaf." Mr. Gwynne, it will be remembered, was the gentleman with whom David Poe, Jr., had played at studying law, and it was curious that a juvenile poem of his son's should fall into his hands some twenty years after his death. Mr. Gwynne did not appear to be struck with "Al Aaraaf," for his opinion of its writer had not prepared Mr. Latrobe for the productions which he had sent to the committee, and which had revealed a new story-teller and a new poet.

On the Monday following the publication of the *Saturday Visitor* which contained "A MS. Found in a Bottle," as Mr. Latrobe was sitting in his office, Poe introduced himself to him as the author of that story, and thanked

him, as one of the committee, for the award in his favor. He was rather below the middle size, though he could not be described as a small man: his figure was good, and he carried himself erect and well, the effect, no doubt, of his training at West Point. He was dressed in black, his frock-coat was buttoned to the throat, where it met the black stock, and not a particle of white was visible. Coat, hat, boots, and gloves had so evidently seen their best days that on most men they would have looked shabby and seedy, but there was something about their wearer that prevented one from criticising them, for *gentleman* was written all over him. His forehead was high, and noticeable for the development at the temple; the expression of his face was grave, almost sad, except when he was conversing, when it became animated and changeable; his voice was agreeable and well modulated, and his words were well chosen and unhesitating. They seated themselves, and in the course of the conversation which followed, Poe informed Mr. Latrobe that he had called upon Mr. Kennedy, who had given him, or had promised to give him, a letter to the publisher of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which he hoped would procure him employment. Mr. Latrobe asked him if he was engaged upon any literary labor, and he told him that he was writing a voyage to the moon, and entered into a disquisition upon the laws of gravity, the height of the earth's atmosphere, the capacities of balloons, and the like. He narrated the preliminary arrangements of this

journey, and, speaking in the first person, described his sensation as he ascended higher and higher, until at last he reached a point in space where the moon's attraction overcame that of the earth, when there was a sudden bouleversement of the car, and a great confusion among its tenants. He became so excited as he proceeded that he spoke rapidly, and gesticulated, and when the overturn took place, he slapped his hands and stamped his foot, carrying Mr. Latrobe along with him in his imaginary journey to the moon. When he had finished, he apologized for his excitability, at which he laughed, and, the conversation turning upon other subjects, he soon afterward took his leave. Such was Edgar Allen Poe, clad in his habit as he lived, in his twenty-fifth year, and such was his avatar in American literature.

The reminiscences of Mr. Latrobe, which I have mostly given in his own words, are interesting, and as accurate, perhaps, as one could expect, after a lapse of forty-two years. He was no doubt correct in stating that Poe told him he had already called upon Mr. Kennedy, but his memory was at fault when he stated that he told him that Mr. Kennedy had given him, or had promised to give him, a letter to the proprietor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, for that periodical was not in existence until nearly a year afterward. Mr. Latrobe assisted in discovering Poe, but his interest in him could not have been very warm, for he confesses that he never saw him again. Not so Mr. Kennedy, who from the first became

his friend. There was no particular reason why he should have been so, for, socially, they were on an entirely different footing. Poe, it is true, was a young man of genius, but the world had not acknowledged him as such, and he was decidedly out at elbows. Mr. Kennedy was a well-to-do gentleman of thirty-eight, a lawyer in good practice, who had represented his State in the House of Delegates, and who held a certain position among American men of letters, as one of the writers of "The Red Book," a periodical publication in which social questions were discussed in a light, gossipy fashion, and which, so far as I can make out, anticipated Irving's "Sketch-Book," and as the author of "Swallow Barn" (1832), a collection of sketches of rural life in Virginia at the beginning of the present century. The first and most natural evidence of good feeling on the part of Mr. Kennedy toward Poe was an invitation to dinner. It gratified him, of course, but it humilitated him still more, for he had only the shabby black suit which he wore when he called on Mr. Latrobe, and that was clearly unfit for a dinner party. He declined the invitation, therefore, and gave the true reason—his personal appearance. His frankness was appreciated by Mr. Kennedy, who supplied him with the clothing that he needed, gave him free access to his table, and a horse for exercise whenever he chose.

This occurred in the fall of 1833 and the winter of 1834. As we know nothing of the life of Poe at this

time, other than what is implied by these pleasant attentions of Mr. Kennedy, we have to conjecture what it really was. He probably made his home with Mrs. Clemm and her daughter Virginia, and devoted himself to writing other Tales of the Folio Club, and possibly articles for the Baltimore journals, with the editors of which it is natural to suppose that Mr. Kennedy had some influence that he exercised on his behalf. It was not a propitious season for one who was desirous of earning money by literary pursuits, particularly one who was so little known as Poe. There were no periodicals that were worth speaking of. Mr. N. P. Willis had commenced the *American Monthly Magazine* four or five years before, but it was now merged into the *New York Mirror*, which was flourishing on his "Pencillings by the Way." Mr. Charles Fenno Hoffman had commenced the *Knickerbocker Magazine* the previous year (1833), and had edited a few numbers of it when it passed into the hands of the Rev. Timothy Flint, a Congregational minister of Massachusetts, who had spent ten years as a missionary in the valley of the Mississippi, and had written a volume of Recollections of that region, besides three or four forgotten novels and romances, and a history of Indian wars in the West. There may have been other ventures whose names have dropped out of our literary history, but these, with two or three heavy quarterlies,—the *North American Review*, the *Christian Examiner*, and so on,—represented the periodical literature of the country. It was doubtless

honorable to write for them, but it was certainly not profitable, for the prices which they paid (when they paid at all) would hardly have satisfied the copyists of the authors' manuscripts: there was more money in the legal narratives of John Doe and Richard Roe than in the dissertations of the *North American Review*, whose honorarium for years was two dollars per printed page. It was not a propitious season for writers, as I have said, and it could not be considered a very promising one for publishers. So it seems to us now, but so it did not seem to Mr. Thomas W White, a printer of Richmond, who projected a new magazine—a magazine which should represent the literature of the South, which so far had escaped recognition in the magazines of the East. He was not encouraged by his friends, we are told; but, being a determined man, he refused to be discouraged, and set resolutely to work to obtain the endorsement of some of the leading authors of America. He was backed by the good wishes and the promised support of such men as Irving, Cooper, Paulding, Kennedy, and John Quincy Adams.

It is instructive to turn from the American magazines of to-day, popular or otherwise, to the first number of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, which bears the date of August, 1834, and the imprint of T. W. White, Printer and Proprietor. It consisted of thirty-two double-column octavo pages, and its subscription price was five dollars per annum. I am not prepared to say that it was worse than the average periodical literature of the time, but it

was pretty bad, though it contained a piece of verse by Mrs. Lydia H. Sigourney—"Columbus at the University of Salamanca"—and Mr. Richard Henry Wilde's best known lyric, "My Life is like the Summer Rose," the authorship of which was attributed to though not fixed upon him. It contained, also, a number of dull book-notices, the perfunctory work of some unintelligent hack-writer. Two months passed before the second number appeared, and it could hardly be said to be superior to its predecessor. Mrs. Sigourney contributed another poem, "Death among the Trees," and Mr. William Wirt a "Letter to a Law Student." Unintelligent hack furnished a dull notice of Bulwer's "Pilgrims of the Rhine," and padded it out with an extract seven or eight pages in length. The third number, which was extended to sixty-four pages, was instructive, if not entertaining, The *pièce de resistance* was the first of a series of papers on the "Present Condition of Tripoli"; the side-dishes were a "Letter from a Virginian in New England," and an article on Mr. N. P. Willis (copied from the *Norfolk Beacon*); the dessert was a sonnet on Byron, attributed (and justly) to Mr. Wilde, "Byron! 't is thine alone on eagle's pinions." Why Mr. Wilde did not acknowledge his verse can only be conjectured; perhaps it was because he was a member of Congress, and preferred the reputation of a legislator to that of a poet. The fourth number must have gratified its poetical contributors, for it was weighted with no less than twenty-five of their effusions, among

which was a parody on Bryant's "Death of the Flowers," and a translation of one of the sonnets of Camoens, by Mr. Wilde. The fifth number curtailed its ambitious poets to the extent of nine, among whom was Mr. Wilde, who celebrated "Napoleon's Grave" in a pensive elegy. A review of Bulwer's "Last Days of Pompeii" was followed by a long letter from Mr. Sumner Lincoln Fairfield, who accused the British novelist of plagiarizing that story from a poem of Mr. Fairfield's entitled "The Last Night of Pompeii," and published two years before (1832). In the sixth number more than a score of the contributors were allowed to drop into poetry again. Mr. Wilde was represented by a translation from the Italian; Mr. George P. Morris by "The Miniature,"—a copy of commonplace verses selected from the *Spirit of the Times*,—and Sir William Blackstone by his "Farewell to the Muse." These contributions, with further instalments of the papers on Tripoli, the letters from New England, and the customary book-notices, brought the *Southern Literary Messenger* up to February, 1835.

By whatever standard it was measured, it was a failure, as any one but Mr. White would have seen, and as he probably saw, though he determined to continue it. He had not been sustained by the leading writers of America, further than by their good wishes, for not one of them had contributed a line to his luckless periodical. Among those who had promised to do so, and no doubt meant to keep his promise, was Mr. Kennedy, who, early in the

winter of 1835, recommended Poe to him as a contributor. How Poe had lived during the twelve or fifteen months which had elapsed since he gained the prize of one hundred dollars for his story in the *Saturday Visitor*, has not been ascertained; but, as I before suggested, he probably resided with Mrs. Clemm, and added what he could to her scanty income by any literary work that came in his way. Poe's first contribution to the *Southern Literary Messenger* must have created a sensation in the editorial office after it had been read, for it was considered worthy of an honorable mention. It was his uncanny story, "Berenice," which was published in the number for March, 1835, with the following introduction: "'Berenice,' a tale, by Edgar A. Poe, will be read with interest, especially by the patrons of the *Messenger* in this city, of which Mr. Poe is a native, and where he resided until manhood. Whilst we confess that we think there is too much German horror in his subject, there can be but one opinion as to the force and elegance of his style. He discovers a superior capacity and a highly cultivated taste in composition."

Poe's second contribution to the *Messenger* confirmed the editor's belief in the genius of his contributor, and confirmed, also, his belief that it was not a healthy kind of writing. "'Morella' will unquestionably prove that Mr. Poe has great powers of imagination, and a command of language seldom surpassed; yet we cannot but lament that he has drank so deep at some enchanted

fountain which seems to blend in his fancy the shadows of the tomb with the clouds and sunshine of life. We doubt, however, if any thing in the same style can be cited which contains more terrific beauty than this tale." The writer of this paragraph, whoever he was, was wiser in his day and generation than many who have since written about Poe, for he divined clearly the intensely morbid character of his work. Nor was he alone in his dislike of it, for the April number of the *Messenger*, in which "Morella" appeared, contained an extract from the *Augusta Courier*, which admitted the beauty and elegance of style of "Berenice," though it stigmatized it as altogether too full of the wild, mysterious, horrible, and improbable. Poe's first poetic contribution to the *Messenger* was in "Morella," which originally contained a hymn, which may now be found in a shortened form in his poetical works, "At morn, at noon, at twilight dim."

We are brought nearer to Poe at this time than by any extant writing of his own by a brief note of Mr. Kennedy's, which was dated at Baltimore, April 13, 1835, and addressed to the proprietor of the *Messenger*, who had written to him in regard to his protégé: "Dear Sir—Poe did right in referring to me. He is very clever with his pen—classical and scholarlike. He wants experience and direction, but I have no doubt he can be made very useful to you. And, poor fellow! he is *very* poor. I told him to write something for every number of your magazine, and that you might find it to your advantage to give

him some permanent employ. He has a volume of very bizarre tales in the hands of ———, in Philadelphia, who for a year and a half has been promising to publish them. This young fellow is highly imaginative, and a little given to the *terrific*. He is at work upon a tragedy, but I have turned him to drudging upon whatever may make money, and I have no doubt you and he will find your account in each other." The proprietor of the *Messenger* certainly found his account in the "young fellow," whom he proceeded to eulogize for the third time: "'Lionizing,' by Mr. Poe, is an inimitable piece of wit and satire; and the man must be far gone in a melancholic humor whose risibility is not moved by this tale. Although the scene is laid in the foreign city of '*Fum-Fudge*,' the disposition which it satirizes is often displayed in the cities of this country, even in our own community, and will probably continue to exist, unless 'Mrs. Butler's Journal' should have disgusted the world with lions." "Mrs. Butler's Journal" was reviewed in this number, as was also Mr. Kennedy's novel of "Horse-shoe Robinson," the latter by Poe, who was much dissatisfied with his review, as he signified in a letter to Mr. White: "In regard to my critique of Mr. Kennedy's novel, I seriously feel ashamed of what I have written. I fully intended to give the work a thorough review, and examine it in detail. Ill health alone prevented me from so doing. At the time I made the hasty sketch I sent you, I was so ill as to be hardly able to see the paper on which I wrote, and I finished it

in a state of complete exhaustion. I have not, therefore, done any thing like justice to the book, and I am vexed about the matter, for Mr. Kennedy has proved himself a kind friend to me in every respect, and I am sincerely grateful to him for many acts of generosity and attention. You ask me if I am perfectly satisfied with your course. I reply that I am—entirely. My poor services are not worth what you give for them."

The critics of the provincial press were somewhat divided in their opinions of Poe, whose genius, however, they freely acknowledged. The Aristarchus of the *Augusta Chronicle*, for example, characterized his "Morella" as one of the best of those wild and gloomy exhibitions of passion heretofore belonging almost peculiarly to the genius of the German school of romance. "We cannot but think that such over-wrought delineations of the passions are injurious to correct taste, however attractive they may be to the erratic mood and unnatural imaginings of a poetically vivid mind. Mr. Poe is capable of higher and more useful flights, and will no doubt reach an enviable eminence if he does not suffer the current of his genius to be choked up by a morbid sensibility, or diverted from its natural channel by the destructive freshet of a superabundant fancy." Still more severe was the Zoilus of the *Charlottesville Advocate*, who could not subscribe to the praise which had been lavished upon Mr. Poe's "palpable obscure" effusions. "His 'Lionizing' is a feeble imitation of Slawkenbergius, and makes a very

pedantic display of authors, whom he may, or may not, have read, but of whom no one else has ever heard. It is, nevertheless, better than his 'Morella' of the preceding number."

Poe's fourth contribution to the *Messenger* was the "Journey to the Moon," which he was writing when he paid his solitary but memorable visit to Mr. Latrobe—"Hans Phaall." It was highly thought of by the proprietor, or editor, who considered it his duty to give to it his own high indorsement. "Mr Poe's story of 'Hans Phaall' will add much to his reputation as an imaginative writer. In these *ballooning* days, when every 'puny whipster' is willing to risk his neck in an attempt to 'leave dull earth behind him,' and we hear so much of the benefits which science is to derive from the art of aërostation, a journey to the moon may be considered a matter of mere moonshine. Mr. Poe's scientific Dutch bellows-mender is certainly a prodigy, and the more to be admired as he performs impossibilities, and details them with a minuteness so much like the truth that they seem quite probable. Indeed, the cause of his great enterprise is in admirable harmony with the exploits which it encourages him to perform. There are thousands who, to escape the pertinacity of uncivil creditors, would be tempted to a flight as perilous as that of Hans Phaall. Mr. Poe's story is a long one, but it will appear short to the reader, whom it bears along with irresistible interest through a region of which, of all others, we know least,

but which his fancy has invested with peculiar charms. We trust that a future missive from the lunar voyager will give us a narrative of his adventures in the orb that he has been the first to explore." Poe's fifth contribution to the *Messenger*, "The Visionary," was published in the number for July, and contained a poem afterward relegated to his poetical works, under the title "To One in Paradise." The concluding stanza of the original is omitted in the later version:

> "Alas! for that accursed time,
> They bore thee o'er the billow,
> From love to titled age and crime,
> And an unholy pillow,
> From me and from our misty clime,
> Where weeps the silver willow!"

We obtain a personal glimpse of Poe about this time in a letter which he wrote in answer to one received from Mr. White: "You ask me if I would be willing to come on to Richmond if you should have occasion for my services during the coming winter. I reply that nothing would give me greater pleasure. I have been desirous for some time past of paying a visit to Richmond, and would be glad of any reasonable excuse for so doing. Indeed, I am anxious to settle myself in that city, and if, by any chance, you hear of a situation likely to suit me, I would gladly accept it, were the salary even the merest trifle. I should, indeed, feel myself greatly indebted to you if through your means I could accomplish this object. What you say in the conclusion of your letter, in relation

to the supervision of proof-sheets, gives me reason to hope that possibly you may find something for me to do in your office. If so, I should be very glad, for at present only a very small portion of my time is employed."

The August number of the *Messenger* was, in a certain sense, a Poe number, in that it contained "Bon-Bon," the longest paper that he had yet furnished; his poem, "The Coliseum," which was credited to the *Baltimore Visitor*, and what may be called an editorial card in reference to Poe and his critics. It was as follows: "As one or two of the criticisms in relation to the tales of our contributor, Mr. Poe, have been directly at variance with those generally expressed, we take the liberty of inserting here a *letter* (signed by three gentlemen of the highest standing in literary matters), which we find in the *Baltimore Visitor*. This paper having offered a premium for the best Prose Tale, and the best Poem, both these premiums were awarded by the committee to Mr. Poe. The award was, however, subsequently altered so as to exclude Mr. Poe from the second premium, in consideration of his having taken the higher one. Here follows the extract: 'Among the prose articles offered were many of various and distinguished merit, but the singular force and beauty of those sent by the author of "Tales of the Folio Club" leave us no room for hesitation in that department. We have accordingly awarded the premium to a tale entitled "A MS. Found in a Bottle." It would hardly be doing justice to say that the tale we have chosen is the best of six

offered by him. We cannot refrain from saying that the author owes it to his own reputation, as well as to the gratification of the community, to publish the entire volume (the "Tales of the Folio Club"). These Tales are eminently distinguished by wild, vigorous, and poetical imagination, a rich style, a fertile invention, and varied and curious learning.

'JOHN P. KENNEDY,
'J. H. B. LATROBE,
'JAMES H. MILLER.'

"We presume this letter must set the question at rest. 'Lionizing' is one of the tales here spoken of; 'The Visionary' is another. The 'Tales of the Folio Club' are sixteen in all, and we believe it is the author's intention to publish them in the autumn. When such men as Miller, Latrobe, Kennedy, Tucker, and Paulding speak unanimously of any literary productions in terms of exalted commendation, it is nearly unnecessary to say that we are willing to abide by their decision."

What was the nature of these criticisms which were so directly at variance with those generally expressed, we are left to conjecture; they must have been very irritating, however, to have called forth this card, which by no means confirms the impression of Mr. Latrobe as to the general worthlessness of the contributions upon which he and his fellow-committeemen had sat in judgment. About the time it was written Poe was offered the position of assistant editor of the *Messenger*, at a salary of

ten dollars a week. He accepted it, and on the strength of the support which it seemed to assure, persuaded Mrs. Clemm to let him marry her daughter Virginia. They were married at Baltimore on the 2d of September, 1835, at the old Christ Church, by the Rev. John Johns, and the next day he departed for Richmond alone.

Poe's return to Richmond was a hazardous experiment. He had lived there as a boy and man for upward of twenty years, and was known to many of its inhabitants. His playmates and school-fellows were living; the friends of Mr. Allan, who had been dead about a year and a half, were living; and worst of all, Mrs. Allan and her children were living, possessors of the noble old mansion in which his childhood was passed, and of the goodly estate which might have descended to him. Why he had been desirous of revisiting Richmond, as he wrote to Mr. White a few months before, I cannot understand. Surely he must have known that nothing pleasant awaited him there—nothing, indeed, but humiliation and remorse and bitterness of spirit. He described his condition in a letter to Mr. Kennedy, to whom he expressed his gratitude for his frequent and ineffectual assistance and kindness, and his acceptation of the situation of assistant editor of the *Messenger*, which was due to his influence. "The situation is agreeable to me for many reasons, but, alas, it appears to me that nothing can give me pleasure, or the slightest gratification. Excuse me, my dear sir, if in this letter you find much incoherency; my feelings, at this

moment, are pitiable indeed. I am suffering under a depression of spirits such as I have never felt before. I have struggled in vain against the influence of this melancholy. *You will believe me* when I say that I am still miserable, in spite of the great improvement in my cirstances. I say you will believe me, and for this simple reason, that a man who is writing for *effect*, does not write thus. My heart is open before you; if it be worth reading, read it. I am wretched, and know not why. Console me, if you can. But let it be quickly, or it will be too late. Write me immediately; convince me that it is worth one's while—that it is at all necessary—to live, and you will prove yourself indeed my friend. Persuade me to do what is right. I mean this. I do not mean that you should consider what I now write you a jest. Oh, pity me, for I feel that my words are incoherent; but I will recover myself. You will not fail to see that I am suffering under a depression of spirits which will ruin me should it be long continued. Write me, then, and quickly; urge me to do what is right. Your words will have more weight with me than the words of others, for you were my friend when no one else was. Fail not, as you value your peace of mind hereafter."

This letter of Poe's, which was dated only nine days after his marriage, must have been a puzzle to Mr. Kennedy, who could not be expected to understand the sudden and mysterious sorrow of its writer. His answer, which was kind and sensible, was no doubt considered

commonplace by Poe, as it has been by his admirers since, but I do not well see how he could have written otherwise. "I am sorry to see you in such a plight as your letter shows you in. It is strange that just at this time, when everybody is praising you, and when fortune is beginning to smile upon your hitherto wretched circumstances, you should be invaded by these blue devils. It belongs, however, to your age and temper to be thus buffeted; but be assured, it only wants a little resolution to master the adversary forever. You will doubtless do well henceforth in literature, and add to your *comforts* as well as reputation, which, it gives me great pleasure to assure you, is everywhere rising in popular esteem." Besides the private view of Poe afforded by the two notes which I have just quoted, there was a public view of him at the same time which was more worthy of his talents. It was in the September number of the *Messenger*, which contained two of his characteristic stories, "Loss of Breath, a Tale à la Blackwood," and "King Pest," besides a copy of verses purporting to have been written in an album. I copy them, not on account of any merit which they possess, but because they are the first of three versions of a trifle which was afterward dedicated to Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood:

"Eliza! let thy generous heart
From its present pathway part not;
Being everything which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.

So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy unassuming beauty,
And truth shall be a theme of praise
Forever, and love a duty."

The first number of the second volume of the *Messenger* (December, 1835) opened with a flourish of trumpets on the part of the publisher, who made the usual promises in regard to his intentions, and of favors received from his distinguished contributors, among whom he hoped to be pardoned for singling out the name of Mr. Edgar A. Poe. "Not with a design to make any invidious distinction, but because such a mention of him finds numberless precedents in the journals on every side, which have rung with the praises of his uniquely original vein of imagination, and of humorous, delicate satire." We must consider Poe from this time, I suppose, the editor of the *Messenger*. He does not appear to have prepared himself for the position by writing any thing new, for his first contribution was a portion of the tragedy upon which he was engaged eight or nine months before, but which he had laid aside at the suggestion of Mr. Kennedy. It was entitled "Scenes from an Unpublished Drama," the scenes being three, and the drama the fragment known as "Politian." It was not a propitious beginning for the new editor, for it possessed no dramatic, and but little poetic merit—nothing, in short, that might not have been written by any clever amateur in verse. He was represented in prose by the tale which had taken the prize from the *Saturday Visitor*—"A MS. Found in a Bottle"—which

was credited to *The Gift*, an annual edited by Miss Eliza Leslie, and by several pages of book-notices, which were noticeable for severity. Poe's practice of copying old compositions, which was begun by the reprint of the "MS. Found in a Bottle," was continued in the next number of the *Messenger* by the reprint of "A Pæan," from the New York edition of his poems, which, however, was not mentioned. It was followed by "Metzengerstein, a Tale in Imitation of the German," and by another and concluding portion of "Politian." The book-notices, which extended to seventeen pages, were smart but flippant. Poe's critical contemporaries are quoted from, as in the earlier numbers of the *Messenger*. The *Charleston Courier*, for example, informs its readers that Poe's genius delights in the creation of strange possibilities, and in investing the most intangible romances in an air of perfect verisimilitude. The *Charlottesville Jeffersonian*, on the contrary, does not accept the justness of the praise which has been bestowed upon *some* of his pieces, but admits that he is a writer of great originality, and one who promises well. The New York *Spirit of the Times* traces an imaginary resemblance between him and a magazinist with whom he had nothing in common—Mr. N. P. Willis,—and discovers that he needs condensation of thought!

The New York edition of his poems was useful to Poe, in giving out copy for the February number of the *Messenger*, for it furnished him with "The Valley Nis,"

the substance of which we have now in his poetical works in "The Valley of Unrest," the forty-six lines of the original version having shrunk in the process of correction to the twenty-seven lines by which they are now represented. His prose contribution to this number consisted of the curious sketch, "Le Duc de l' Omelette," a paper on "Autography," and thirty-two pages of book-notices.

The New York volume was drawn upon again in the March number of the *Messenger*, which contained the poem beginning "Helen, thy beauty is to me," with no notification that it was a reprint and not an original contribution; the only original contribution therein, except the book-notices, being the curious story of "Epimanes." The April number displayed Poe's talent as a humorist in a grotesque sketch entitled "A Tale of Jerusalem"; his talent as an analyst in a long paper on Maelzel's Chess-Player; and his talent as a critic in fourteen pages of book-notices of American authors, among whom were Drake and Halleck, whose "Culprit Fay" and whose "Alnwick Castle" were carefully reviewed. The New York volume was again drawn upon in the May number, where Poe reprinted its opening poem, the sonnet beginning, "Science, meet daughter of old Time thou art" (which originally appeared in the Baltimore volume), and a revised version of "Irene," which now figures in his poetical works as "The Sleeper." The June and the July numbers of the *Messenger* contain nothing from the pen of Poe, except the book-notices, which amounted to

nearly thirty pages. Poe, the contributor, may have been idle at this time, but it is not certain that Poe, the editor, was equally idle, for there is a world of work in the editing of a magazine which is not visible to its readers, and of which the editor himself is not always conscious.

About this time, though it may have been at an earlier period, there was an interruption of the friendly relations between Poe and Mr. White. The tradition of this interruption might possibly have reached us, but the circumstance which occasioned it could hardly have done so but through Poe himself, and his curious habit of preserving every letter that he received, as well as every mention of himself that he ever saw in print. By preserving the following letter from Mr. White he preserved the memory of an episode in his life, which might otherwise have escaped his biographers the least friendly of whom, I think, would willingly have remained in ignorance of it. "My dear Edgar,—I cannot address you in such language as this occasion and my feelings demand: I must be content to speak to you in my plain way. That you are sincere in all your promises I firmly believe. But when you once again tread these streets, I have my fears that your resolutions will fail, and that you will again drink till your senses are lost. If you rely on your strength you are gone. Unless you look to your Maker for help you will not be safe. How much I regretted in parting from you is known to Him only and myself. I had

become attached to you ; I am still ; and I would willingly say return, did not a knowledge of your past life make me dread a speedy renewal of our separation. If you would make yourself contented with quarters in my house or with any private family where liquor is not used, I should think there was some hope for you. But if you go to a tavern, or to any place where it is used at table, you are not safe. You have fine talents, Edgar, and you ought to have them respected as well as yourself. Learn to respect yourself, and you will soon find that you are respected. Separate yourself from the bottle, and from bottle companions, forever. Tell me if you can and will do so. If you become again an assistant in my office, it is to be understood that all engagements on my part cease the moment you get drunk. I am you true friend. T. W. W." It was after this episode, I presume, and probably in consequence of it, that Poe was joined at Richmond by his young wife and her mother.

Poe's poetical powers revived before the publication of the August number of the *Messenger*, which contained his poem of "Israfel." The New York volume was drawn upon for the fourth time in a revised version of the "Doomed City," which was shortened six lines, and re-christened "The City of Sin." His note-book yielded nine pages of literary scraps, culled from a variety of sources, and tumbled together under the heading of "Pinakidia." There was an assumption of scholarship about this paper which was doubtless acceptable to

provincial readers forty-four years ago, but upon which a magazinist of to-day would hardly venture. He charges Campbell with stealing from Blair (as he did five or six years before at West Point), and he finds in a passage of Gray's Hymn to Adversity (which he miscalls an ode) an imitation of Milton, which imitation had been pointed out long before. He also found (what I believe had not before been pointed out) a resemblance between two lines of "Hudibras" and Gray's description of the hoary hair of his Bard. He accuses Young with pilfering a thought from the same poem, and accuses Goldsmith with pilfering from Young. He fails to remember, however, any poet who was in the habit of passing off his old poems as new ones, and, considering that the practice was becoming habitual with him, it is not perhaps to be wondered at.

The three concluding numbers of the second volume of the *Messenger* were enriched with no contribution from Poe, other than the usual notices of books. The first number of the third volume (January, 1837) contained evidences of his industry in an instalment of the "Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," the longest of his prose works; and of his poetical talents, in a ballad, which now figures, in a shortened form, in his poetical works as a "Bridal Ballad," and in the sonnet, "To Zante," the suggestion of which appears to have been derived from two lines in the first part of "Al Aaraaf":

> "And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante,
> Isola d' oro! Fior di Levante!"

It also contained evidence that something had occurred by which his connection with the *Messenger* was severed. It was in a card, and was as follows: "Mr. Poe's attention being called in another direction, he will decline with the present number the editorial duties of the *Messenger*. His critical notices for the month end with Prof. Anthon's Cicero—what follows is from another hand. With the best wishes for the magazine, and to its few foes, as well as many friends, he is now desirous of bidding all parties a peaceful farewell." On the last page of the magazine Mr. White states over his own signature that Poe retired from the editorial department on the 3d instant, but that he would continue to furnish its columns from time to time with the effusions of his vigorous pen. The promise of the last paragraph was kept in the next number in a second instalment of "Arthur Gordon Pym," of whom the readers of the *Messenger* heard no more.

Why did Poe leave the *Messenger* at the beginning of a new volume, for which he had undertaken to furnish what would now be called a serial story, a portion of which was already in print? We are told that he had received an invitation from Dr. Francis Lister Hawks, a North Carolina divine, who was then residing in New York, where he was Rector of St. Stephen's Church, to come to that city and assist him on the *New York Review*, a quarterly which he had projected, and that on the strength of this invitation he severed his connection with Mr. White, and started for New York. Dr. Hawks and his publishers

must have been sanguine as to the success of their inchoate periodical if they insured Poe a better salary than he was receiving as editor of the *Messenger*, and paid it while they were preparing for the first number, which was not published until the following July. Such an arrangement appears to me extremely improbable. The fact remains, however, that Poe and his wife and his mother-in-law removed to New York (apparently in the winter of 1837), and that they remained there until the summer of 1838. How they lived during this period we have to conjecture. There is extant no literary work which Poe is known to have produced, except a paper upon Stephens' "Incidents of Travel in Egypt, Arabia Petrea, and the Holy Land," which was published in the October number of the *New York Review*, the payment for which at the highest rates would not have supported his family long. They are said to have resided at 113 Carmine Street, where Mrs. Clemm endeavored to add to their income by keeping boarders. We have a faint glimpse of Poe at this time in the wordy reminiscences of Mr. William Gowans, an illiterate Irishman who dealt in old books, and who boarded with Mrs. Clemm for upward of eight months. He preferred his opinion of this gifted but unfortunate man to that of his biographers and critics, which he pronounced an excess of exaggeration, and he claimed that while it may have been worth little, it had the merit of coming from an eye- and ear-witness, which is the very highest of legal evidence. He saw much of

Poe (mostly, it would seem, at table), and had an opportunity of conversing with him often, and he declared that he never saw him in the least affected by liquor, and that he was one of the most courteous, gentlemanly, and intelligent companions he had ever met with in his journeyings and sojourns in divers divisions of the globe. "He had an extra inducement to be a good man as well as a good husband, for he had a wife of matchless beauty and loveliness. Her eyes could match those of any houri, and her face defy the genius of Canova to imitate; a temper and disposition of surpassing sweetness. She seemed, withal, as much devoted to him and his every interest as a young mother is to her first-born."

When I said that there was extant no work that Poe is known to have produced at this time, I did not forget "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym," which came to an abrupt ending in the February number of the *Messenger*, and which he finished before the summer of 1838, when it was published by Harper & Brothers. Concerning this book, which does not appear to have been successful in this country, the late Mr. George P. Putnam, who was then a publisher in London, relates the following anecdote, which may be found in the second series of the magazine which bears his name (October, 1869): "At our London office we received, about 1840, a volume called 'The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym, of Nantucket,' which in a long title-page purported to describe sundry veritable voyages, ending with one in which the author had reached the eighty-fourth parallel of southern

latitude. The late Mr. D. Appleton was sitting in our office in Paternoster Row. 'Here is an American contribution to geographical science,' I said to him. 'This man has reached a higher latitude than any European navigator. Let us reprint this for the benefit of Mr. Bull.' He assented, and took a half share in the venture. The grave particularity of the title and of the narrative misled many of the critics, as well as ourselves, and whole columns of these new 'discoveries,' including the hieroglyphics (!) found on the rocks, were copied by many of the English country papers as sober historical truth. Whether such a book were as justifiable as Robinson Crusoe may be questioned—it was certainly ingenious and skilful."

Poe and his family removed to Philadelphia in the summer of 1838; so, at least, I gather from a letter of his to Mr. Nathan C. Brooks, to whom he had applied, after his separation from Mr. Allan, for a situation in a school which he had recently established at Reisterstown, Maryland, and who was now the editor of a periodical which he was about to start in Baltimore, under the title of the *North American Magazine*. Mr. Brooks had applied to him for a contribution to it, and had suggested as a subject the writings of Washington Irving. To this application Poe replied as follows:

"PHILADELPHIA, September 4, 1838.

"MY DEAR SIR:—I duly received your favor with the $10. Touching the review, I am forced to decline it just now. I

should be most unwilling not to execute such a task well, and this I could not do at so short a notice, at least now. I have two other engagements which it would be ruinous to defer. Besides this, I am just leaving Arch Street for a small house, and, of course, somewhat in confusion.

"My main reason, however, for declining is what I at first alleged, viz.: I could not do the review well at short notice. The truth is, I can hardly say that I am conversant with Irving's writings, having read nothing of his since I was a boy, save his 'Grenada.' It would be necessary to give his entire works a reperusal. You see, therefore, the difficulty at once. It is a theme upon which I would like very much to write, for there is a vast deal to be said upon it. Irving is much overrated, and a nice distinction might be drawn between his just and his surreptitious and adventitious reputation—between what is due to the pioneer solely, and what to the writer.

"The merit, too, of his tame propriety and faultlessness of style should be candidly weighed. He should be compared with Addison, something being hinted about imitation, and Sir Roger De Coverley should be brought up in judgment. A bold and *à priori* investigation of Irving's claims would strike home, take my word for it. The American literary world never saw any thing of the kind yet. Seeing, therefore, the opportunity of making a fine hit, I am unwilling to hazard your fame by a failure, and a failure would assuredly be the event were I to undertake the task at present.

"The difficulty with you is nothing; for I fancy you are conversant with Irving's works, old and new, and would not have to read for the task. Had you spoken decidedly when I

saw you, I would have adventured. If you can delay the 'Review' until the second number, I would be most happy to do my best. But this, I presume, is impossible.

"I have gotten nearly out of my late embarrassments. Neilson could not aid me, being much pushed himself. He would, no doubt, have aided me if possible. Present my respects if you see him. Very truly yours,

"EDGAR A. POE.

"Suppose you send me proofs of my articles; it might be as well—that is, if you have time. I look anxiously for the first number, from which I date the dawn of a fine literary day in Baltimore.

"After the 15th I shall be more at leisure, and will be happy to do you any literary service in my power. You have but to hint.

"E. A. P."

The proofs which Poe desired to have sent to him were those of two or three stories, notably of "Ligeia," and of his poem "The Haunted House," the former of which appeared in the September number of the new magazine.

There were three literary events in the life of Poe in 1839—the publication of a volume on conchology, the collection of his stories, and his connection with the *Gentleman's Magazine*. A good deal of ink as well as temper has been wasted over this conchological book of Poe's, concerning which his biographers have shown a world of vast and varied misinformation, few of them

having seen it, or the work of which it was a reprint. This was "The Conchologist's Text-Book" of Captain Thomas Brown. It was a standard work in Great Britain, where it passed through several editions, the one which was used by Poe bearing the imprint of Glasgow, and the date of 1833. Poe copyrighted and published this work as his own, probably because he needed money, and was willing to run the risk of detection.*

Poe's intention to collect his stories, which was mentioned by Mr. Kennedy in a letter to Mr. White, written in April, 1835, was now carried into effect by the publication of two volumes entitled "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque." Before the publication of this collection was finally determined upon (it appeared, I believe, in the autumn or winter of 1839), Poe had formed an editorial connection with Mr. William Evans Burton. Mr. Burton was an English comedian, who had migrated to the United States about five years before. Originally intended for the Church, his talents as an amateur led him to become an actor on the Norwich circuit, and afterward at the Haymarket Theatre. He had dabbled in literature in England, in the *Reflector* and the *Cambridge Quarterly Review*, and, being a pushing man, was ambi-

* Not wishing to break the thread of narrative here, I refer the reader who is curious in this matter to the Appendix, which will enable him to settle for himself the question of Poe's indebtedness to Captain Brown. It is an interesting chapter in the history of "conveying," for which I am indebted to Mr. George P. Philes, of this city, a careful bibliographer, whose merit is to understand what he is writing about. (See last volume.)

tious to do the same in America; so he started a periodical in Philadelphia, which he christened the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and edited himself, after a fashion. This, I believe, was in 1837. He had made the acquaintance of Poe in the spring of 1839, and he engaged him to assist him in his editorial duties, at the same salary which had been paid him for similar duties on the *Messenger*, *i. e.*, ten dollars a week. It was not a munificent salary, judged by the standards of to-day, but it satisfied Poe for his services, which demanded only two hours a day, and left him leisure for other literary employment.

Poe's first contributions to the *Gentleman's Magazine* were not remarkable for originality or quantity. He reprinted, under the title "To Ianthe in Heaven," the poem which he had inserted in "The Visionary," in the *Messenger* for July, 1835, and reprinted, also, from his Baltimore volume, "Spirits of the Dead." The first of these was acknowledged, the last was not. They were followed in the next number by "Fairyland" and "To the River,"—both of which were copied verbatim from the same useful little volume, and by the lines which purported to be written in an album, and were published in the *Messenger* for September, 1835,—the "Eliza" of the opening line of the first version being now transformed into "Fair maiden." The next two numbers contained "The Fall of the House of Usher," and "William Wilson," the latter being credited to the annual in which it was about to appear, "The Gift for 1840." This

story has always interested the biographers of Poe, who have found, or fancied they have found, a resemblance between the school-life of William Wilson and that of Poe himself. It is a remarkable story, and no doubt original with Poe, although its counterpart is believed to exist (or to have existed) among the plays of Calderon. At any rate, Irving mentions a similar story which was narrated to him by Captain Medwin, who claimed that it was by Calderon, though it was rarely to be found in the edition of his works. "It is called sometimes *El Embozado*," Irving wrote to his brother Peter, in March, 1825, "and sometimes *El Capitado* (*i. e.*, The man muffled, or disguised). The story is of a young man who has been dogged through life by a mysterious masked man, who thwarts all his plans, and continually crosses his path, and blasts his hopes at the moment of fruition. At length he is in love with a lady, and on the point of entering her house to be made happy. The *Embozado* issues out of it. They fight. The mask of the unknown falls off, and he discovers the very counterpart of himself! He dies with horror at the sight. Such is Medwin's mere recollection of the plot. Lord Byron was so much struck with it, that he intended to make something of it, and repeatedly mentioned the way he thought of treating it. Medwin wrote a sketch of it, and Lord Byron's ideas about it, which he had intended to append to a new edition of his Memoirs, but he has promised to hand it to me. It is certainly very striking, and something fine might be struck out

from the mere idea. The *Embozado* is supposed to be a personification of the young man's passions. I mean to search for the play." Irving sought carefully for this play in the libraries of Spain, but was never able to find it. It is not likely that Poe ever saw it, and its resemblance to "William Wilson" was probably one of those curious coincidences with which all literature abounds.

The story of "Morella," Poe's second contribution to the *Messenger*, did duty for the second time in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, in the shape of an extract from his "Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque," which were then passing through the press, and was succeeded in the following number by "The Conversation of Eiros and Charmian." His name figured with that of Mr. Burton on the title-page of the next volume, but his labors therein were scanty, consisting of "The Business Man," a slight story, a paper on "The Philosophy of Furniture," and the book-reviews, which for the most part were slashing, one on Mr. Longfellow's "Voices of the Night" being especially so, for it accused him of plagiarizing his "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year" from Tennyson's "Death of the Old Year."

We owe to Poe's habit of preserving the letters which were written to him a record of the difference between himself and Mr. White, and the cause which led to it; and we owe to the same habit a letter which was written to him by Mr. Burton, in reply to a communication of his own. Their friendly relations had come to an end, why,

it is useless to inquire now, but they were about to be resumed. "I am sorry that you have thought it necessary to send me such a letter. Your troubles have given a morbid tone to your feelings, which it is your duty to discourage. I myself have been as severely handled by the world as you can possibly have been, but my sufferings have not tinged my mind with melancholy, nor jaundiced my views of society. You must rouse your energies, and if care assail you, conquer it. I will gladly overlook the past. I hope you will as easily fulfil your pledges for the future. We shall agree very well, though I cannot permit the magazine to be made a vehicle for that sort of severity which you think is so 'successful with the mob.' I am truly much less anxious about making a monthly 'sensation' than I am upon the point of fairness. You must, my dear sir, get rid of your avowed ill-feelings toward your brother authors. You see I speak plainly: I cannot do otherwise upon such a subject. You say the people love havoc. I think they love justice. I think you yourself would not have written the article on Dawes in a more healthy state of mind. I am not trammelled by any vulgar consideration of expediency; I would rather lose money than by such undue severity wound the feelings of a kind-hearted and honorable man. Now I am satisfied that Dawes has something of the true fire in him. I regretted your word-catching spirit. But I wander from my design. I accept your proposition to recommence your inter-

rupted avocations upon the *Maga*. Let us meet as if we had not exchanged letters. Use more exercise, write when feelings prompt, and be assured of my friendship. You will soon regain a healthy activity of mind, and laugh at your past vagaries."

Mr. Burton's letter, which seems to me a manly one, touches upon a trait which distinguished Poe from the beginning—I mean his hostility to other writers. We had a glimpse of it in one of his conversations at West Point, in which he charged Campbell with plagiarism, and in the impression which he created in the mind of his listener that the whole bent of his mind was toward cavilling, especially at passages which had received the most unequivocal stamp of general approval —a habit which impelled him to withhold praise alike from the living and dead. Tenacious of his opinions when a child, self-esteem grew with his growth and strengthened with his strength, until confidence became audacity. Deficient in reverence, he questioned authority, and derided achievement. Like Iago, he was nothing if not critical, and the motto of his self-sufficient spirit was *Nil admirari*. Literary history abounds with instances of young writers who have delighted to run amuck at established reputations, and with other (but fewer) instances of old writers who have persisted in the same dangerous amusement. It is a weakness incident to youth and ambition, but it is one which sound minds outgrow, sooner or later—the sooner the better for their happi-

ness, and the intellectual value of their work. I do not think that Poe ever outgrew it, or sought to outgrow it. He believed that his readers loved havoc; Mr. Burton, on the contrary, believed that they loved justice. And he was right, as the criticisms of Poe have proved, for they have failed to commend themselves to the good-sense of his countrymen. His narrow but acute mind enabled him to detect the verbal faults of those whom he criticised, but it disqualified him from perceiving their mental qualities. He mastered the letter, but the spirit escaped him. He advanced no critical principle which he established; he attacked no critical principle which he overthrew. He broke a few butterflies on his wheel, but he destroyed no reputation. He was a powerless iconoclast.

Poe's connection with Mr. Burton is said to have lasted about a year, and to have ceased in June, 1840. We know next to nothing about him personally at this time, the little that has reached us being exceedingly vague and colorless. He had one acquaintance, Captain Mayne Reid, a voluminous Irish writer of books of adventure for juvenile readers, by whom he was often visited at his residence in Spring Garden, a pleasant suburb of Philadelphia. His house, which was a small one, was beautified by flowers, enlivened by the singing of birds, and illuminated by the presence of his young wife, who is described as angelically beautiful in person, and not less beautiful in spirit. "No one who remembers that dark-

eyed, dark-haired daughter of the South; her face so exquisitely lovely; her gentle, graceful demeanor; no one who has ever spent an hour in her society, but will indorse what I have said of this lady, who was the most delicate realization of the poet's ideal. But the bloom upon her cheek was too pure, too bright for earth. It was consumption's color—that sadly beautiful light that beckons to an early grave." Watching over these unfortunate Babes in the Wood was the poet's mother-in-law, Mrs. Clemm, whom Captain Reid described as one of our grand American mothers. "She was the ever-vigilant guardian of the house, watching over the comfort of her two children, keeping every thing neat and clean, so as to please the fastidious eyes of the poet; going to market, and bringing home the little delicacies that their limited means would allow; going to publishers with a poem, a critique, or a story, and often returning without the much-needed money." Such was Mrs. Clemm, as she lingered in the shadowy memory of Captain Reid, who unconsciously added to her employments, I think, the tradition of what she was to Poe in the latter years of his life. I do not see, at any rate, why she should have tried to peddle his manuscripts while he was the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, nor who was likely to have purchased them in the brief interval between his leaving it and becoming the editor of *Graham's Magazine*, which was a consolidation, so to speak, of that periodical with a lesser one, entitled *The Casket*, which was owned by Mr. George R. Graham,

a Philadelphia editor, who naturally bestowed his name upon his new intellectual offspring. This was in November, 1840.

The editor of *Graham's Magazine* was as notable a personage forty years ago as the editor of the *Atlantic* or *Scribner's* to-day. Judged by the present standard, it was rather an indifferent publication, but it was the best there was then, and to contribute to it was a distinction, as it was once to contribute to the *North American Review*. For what he was and had done, the choice of Poe as its editor was a good one. He was known as a writer of short stories—much better known, indeed, than Hawthorne, who might have been a dangerous rival, if anybody had happened to discover his genius in that direction —and he was known as a merciless critic. His reputation in this last capacity did not endear him to his brother authors, but it did not disincline the crowd from reading his criticisms. They loved justice, no doubt, but they were in no hurry to have it administered.

I shall not follow Poe, while he was editor of *Graham's Magazine*, further than to say that the quickening of his ratiocinative faculties at that time led him to write three of his most ingenious stories, "The Murders of the Rue Morgue," "The Mystery of Marie Roget," and "The Purloined Letter," and to engage in the profitless task of unriddling writings in cipher. He was brought in contact with the authors of Philadelphia, which occupied an intellectual position to which it has no claim at present

among others with the Rev. Rufus Wilmot Griswold, who was coming into notice as a man of letters. A native of Vermont, and a descendant on the mother's side from Thomas Mayhew, the first Governor of the spacious domain entitled Martha's Vineyard, Dr. Griswold had forsaken his vocation as a Baptist minister, and had attached himself to literature, as he understood it, and had published a volume of poems, and a volume of sermons, which last he is declared to have delivered from the pulpit with taste and eloquence. He was a man of considerable talent and great industry, with a passion for compiling from the works of his betters, and when Poe made his acquaintance, in the spring of 1841, he was engaged upon a bulky volume on "The Poets and Poetry of America." They met one morning, either at the office of *Graham's Magazine* or at Poe's house, and had a long conversation about American writers, especially those who were to be represented in this volume, in which Poe was naturally desirous to appear. A few days later (March 29th), he sent to Dr. Griswold a collection of his poems, from which he was to select any that pleased his fancy, and called his attention to one in particular, "The Haunted Palace," which he declared that Mr. Longfellow had plagiarized. It was first published, he said, in Brooks' *Museum*, a monthly journal of Baltimore, and was afterward embodied by him in "The House of Usher," which was printed in the *Gentleman's Magazine* about a year and a half before. "Here it was, I suppose, that Profes-

sor Longfellow saw it; for, about six weeks afterward, there appeared in the *Southern Literary Messenger* a poem by him called 'The Beleaguered City,' which may now be found in his volume. The identity is striking, for by 'The Haunted Palace' I mean to imply a mind haunted by phantoms—a disordered brain—and by 'The Beleaguered City' Prof. L. means just the same. But the whole tournure of the poem is based upon mine, as you will see at once. The allegorical conduct, the style of its expression and versification—all are mine. As I understood you to say that you meant to preface each set of poems by some biographical notice, I have ventured to send you the above memoranda, the particulars of which (in a case where an author is so little known as myself) might not be easily obtained elsewhere." I cannot believe that Poe really believed in the truth of the charge which he brought against Mr. Longfellow in this letter, for to do so would shake my faith in the soundness of his mind. I can see no resemblance in the allegorical conduct of the poems in question, and certainly in the style of their versification and expression they are as unlike as two poems well can be.

Dr. Griswold published his *magnum opus*, which Poe obtained from its publishers in order to review it. "I like it decidedly," he wrote its compiler. "It is of immense importance as a guide to what we have done; but you have permitted your good nature to influence you to a degree. I would have omitted at least a dozen whom

you have quoted, and I can think of five or six that should have been in. But with all its faults—you see I am perfectly frank with you—it is a better book than any other man in the United States could have made of the materials. This I will say." Not long after writing this note, which was without date, Poe wrote a letter to Mr. Frederick William Thomas, an industrious man of letters, who considered himself a Southerner, though he was born in Rhode Island, and who was known as the author of three novels, the latest of which, "Howard Pinckney," was published in 1840. The letter explains itself, but does not explain the circumstances of its writer, whose salary as the editor of *Graham's Magazine* ought to have been large enough to preclude him from seeking clerical employment in Washington.

"My Dear Thomas:—With this I mail you the July No. of the Mag. If you can get us a notice in the *Intelligencer*, as you said, I will take it as a particular favor; but if it is inconvenient, do not put yourself to trouble about it.

"I have just heard through Graham, who obtained his information from Ingraham, that you have stepped into an office at Washington, salary one thousand dollars. From the bottom of my heart I wish you joy. You can now lucubrate at your ease, and will infallibly do something worthy yourself.

"For my own part, notwithstanding Graham's unceasing civility and real kindness, I feel more and more disgusted with my situation. Would to God I could do as you have done. Do you seriously think that an application on my part

to Tyler would have a good result? My claims, to be sure, are few. I am a Virginian—at least I call myself one, for I have resided all my life, until within the last few years, in Richmond. My political principles have always been, as nearly as may be, with the existing administration, and I battled with right good-will for Harrison when opportunity offered. With Mr. Tyler I have some slight personal acquaintance, although it is a matter which he has possibly forgotten. For the rest, I am a literary man, and I see a disposition in Government to cherish letters. Have I any chance? I would be greatly indebted to you if you would reply to this as soon as you can, and tell me if it would, in your opinion, be worth my while to make an effort; and, if so, put me on the right track. This could not be better done than by detailing to me your own mode of proceeding.

"It appears that Ingraham is in high dudgeon because I spoke ill of his 'Quadroone.' I am really sorry to hear it; but it is a matter that cannot be helped. As a man, I like him much, and whenever I could do so, without dishonor to my own sense of truth, I have praised his writings. His 'South-West,' for example, I lauded highly. His 'Quadroone' is, in my honest opinion, trash. If I must call it a good book to preserve the friendship of Prof. Ingraham, Prof. Ingraham may go to the devil.

"I am *really* serious about the office. If you can assist me in any way, I am sure you will. Remember me kindly to Dow, and believe me,

"Yours most truly,

"EDGAR A. POE."

At the end of this letter, which was dated "Philadelphia, June 26, '41," he added the following words in pencil: "It is not impossible that you could effect my object by merely showing this letter yourself personally to the President, and speaking of me as the original editor of the *Messenger*."

Eight days later (July 4th), Poe wrote again to Mr. Thomas:

"My Dear Thomas:—I received yours of the 1st this morning, and have again to thank you for the interest you take in my welfare. I wish to God I could visit Washington, but—the old story, you know—I have no money; not enough to take me there, saying nothing of getting back. It is a hard thing to be poor; but as I am kept so by an honest motive I dare not complain.

"Your suggestion about Mr. Kennedy is well-timed, and here, Thomas, you can do me a true service. Call upon Kennedy—you know him, I believe; if not, introduce yourself,—he is a perfect gentleman, and will give you cordial welcome. Speak to him of my wishes, and urge him to see the Secretary of War in my behalf, or one of the other Secretaries, or President Tyler. I mention in particular the Secretary of War, because I have been to W. Point, and this may stand me in some stead. I would be glad to get almost any appointment, even a five hundred dollar one, so that I have something independent of letters for a subsistence. To coin one's brain into silver at the nod of a master is, to my thinking, the hardest task in the world. Mr. Kennedy has been, at all times, a

true friend to me—he was the first true friend I ever had—I am indebted to him *for life itself*. He will be willing to help me now, but *needs urging*, for he is always head and ears in business. Thomas, may I depend on you? By the way, I wrote to Mr. K. about ten days ago on the subject of a magazine, a project of mine in connection with Graham, and have not yet heard from him. Ten to one I misdirected the letter, or sent it to Baltimore, for I am very thoughtless about such matters.

"So you will set me down as a 'magician' if I decipher your friend's cryptograph. No sooner suggested than done. Tell him to read this: 'In one of those peripatetic circumrotations I obviated a rustic whom we subjected to a catechetical interrogation respecting the characteristics of the edifice to which he was approximate. With a volubility uncongealed by the frigorific powers of vallatin bashfulness, he ejaculated a voluminous replication, from the universal tenor of whose contents I deduct the subsequent amalgamation of heterogeneous facts without dubiety,'" etc.

Poe then proceeded to give the key-note of the cryptograph, and a number of the abbreviations used by its composer,—triangles, brackets, and what not in the way of arbitrary characters, which cannot be reproduced here,—and resumed the thread of his letter:

"This, you will admit, is altogether beyond the limit of my challenge, which extended only to ciphers *such as that of Berryer*. You will also admit that phrases constructed for purposes of deception (as your friend's) are *infinitely* more

difficult of perusal than a cipher intended for actual conveyance of one's natural ideas. The truth is, that Dr. Fraley's cryptograph is inadmissible as such, because it cannot be readily deciphered by the person to whom it is addressed, and who possesses the key. In proof of this, I will publish it in the Mag., with a reward to any one who shall read it *with the key*, and I am pretty sure that no one will be found to do it.

"I have not meddled with the first cryptograph, for I thought the Dr.'s scepticism would be sufficiently set at rest by my solution of the longer one, and, to say truth, I am exceedingly busy just now. Let him insist, however, and read is the word. Nothing intelligible can be written, which, with time, I cannot decipher. No more difficult cipher *can* be constructed than the one he has sent. It embodies all the *essentials* of abstruseness, and is very clever.

"As I mean to publish it this month, will you be kind enough to get from his hand an acknowledgment of my solution, adding your own acknowledgment, in such form that I may append both to the cipher by way of note? I wish to do this because I am seriously accused of humbug in this matter, a thing I despise. People *will not* believe I really decipher the puzzles. Write by return of mail. Yours, truly,

"E. A. Poe.

"State that I deciphered it by return of mail,—as I do."

The idea of an office under Government, which was entertained by Poe when he wrote the two letters just quoted, was entertained by him for more than a year later, during which time he seems to have been buoyed

up by the hope that he would obtain it. He had ceased to be the editor of *Graham's Magazine* when he wrote his third letter to Mr. Thomas.

"PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 12, 1842.

"MY DEAR THOMAS:—I did not receive yours of the 2d until yesterday, why, God only knows, as I either went or sent every day to the Post-Office. Neither have I seen Mr. Beard, who, I presume, had some difficulty in finding my residence. Since you were here I have moved out in the neighborhood of Fairmount. I have often heard of Beard, from friends who know him personally, and should have been glad to make his acquaintance.

"A thousand sincere thanks for your kind offices in the matter of the appointment. So far, nothing has been done here in the way of *reform*. Thos. S. Smith is to have the Collectorship, but it appears has not yet received his commission, a fact which occasions much surprise among the quidnuncs.

"Should I obtain the office—and, of course, I can no longer doubt that I shall obtain it—I shall feel that to you alone I am indebted. You have shown yourself a true friend, and I am not likely to forget it, however impotent I may be, now or hereafter, to reciprocate your many kindnesses. I would give the world to clasp you by the hand and assure you personally of my gratitude. I hope it will not be very long before we meet.

"In the event of getting the place, I am undetermined what *literary* course to pursue; much will depend upon the salary. Graham has made me a good offer to return. He is not espe-

cially pleased with Griswold, nor is any one else, with the exception of the Rev. gentleman himself, who has gotten himself into quite a hornet's nest by his 'Poets and Poetry.' It appears you gave him personal offence by *delay* in replying to his demand for information touching Mrs. Welby, I believe, or somebody else. Hence his omission of you in the body of the book; for he had prepared quite a long article from my MS., and had selected several pages for quotation. He is a pretty fellow to set himself up for an *honest* judge, or even as a capable one. About two months since, we were talking of the book, when I said that I thought of reviewing it in full for the *Democratic Review*, but found my design anticipated by an article from that ass O'Sullivan, and that I knew no other work in which a notice would be readily admissible. Griswold said, in reply: 'You need not trouble yourself about the *publication* of the review, should you decide upon writing it, for I will attend to all that. I will get it in some reputable work, and look to it for the usual pay, in the meantime handing you whatever your charge would be.' This, you see, was an ingenious insinuation of *a bribe* to puff his book. I accepted his offer forthwith, and wrote the review, handed it to him, and received from him the compensation; he never daring to look over the MS. in my presence, and taking it for granted that all was right. But that review has not yet appeared, and I am doubtful if it ever will. I wrote it precisely as I would have written under ordinary circumstances, and be sure there was no predominance of praise.

"Should I go back to Graham, I will endeavor to bring about some improvements in the general appearance of the

magazine, and above all to get rid of the quackery which now infects it.

"If I do *not* get the appointment, I should not be surprised if I joined Foster in the establishment of a Mag. in New York. He has made me an offer to join him. I suppose you know that he now edits the *Aurora*.

"Touching your poem. Should you publish it, Boston offers the best facilities; but I feel sure that you will get no publisher to print it, except on your own account. Reason—Copy-Right Laws. However, were I in your place, and could contrive in *any* way, I would print it at my own expense—of course without reference to emolument, which is not to be hoped. It would make only a small volume, and the cost of publishing it, even in such style as Hoffman's last poems, could not be much, absolutely. It should be handsomely printed, or not at all.

"When is Rob. Tyler to issue his printed poem?

"Have you seen how Benjamin and Tasistro have been playing Kilkenny cats with each other? I have always told Graham that Tasistro stole every thing worth reading which he offered for sale.

"What is it about Ingraham? He has done for himself, in the opinion of all honest men, by his chicaneries.

"I am happy to say that Virginia's health has slightly improved. My spirits are proportionately good. Perhaps all will yet go well. Write soon, and believe me ever your true friend,

"EDGAR A. POE."

The difference of temperament between Poe and Dr.

Griswold prevented any friendship between them, particularly after Poe had been supplanted, as he conceived himself to be, by Dr. Griswold as the editor of *Graham's Magazine.* Neither could like the other personally, and intellectually they were as far asunder as the poles. It was natural that Dr. Griswold should believe in the excellence of his "Poets and Poetry of America," and it was equally natural that Poe should question it. It was his business as a critic to find fault, at any rate it was his habit to do so, and Dr. Griswold did not escape his censure, as well as that of most of the living poets whom he had included in his book, to say nothing of those whom he had excluded from it. Poe seems to have expressed his opinion of it freely, and, at a later period, to have delivered a lecture upon the subject which it professed to cover, and to have reviewed it sharply.

We have three glimpses of Poe at this time (or near it), one by Dr. Griswold, another by Mr. Graham, and a third by Mr. T. C. Clarke. "His manner," Dr. Griswold wrote, "except during his fits of intoxication, was very quiet and gentlemanly; he was usually dressed with simplicity and elegance; and when once he sent for me to visit him, during a period of illness, caused by protracted and anxious watching at the side of his sick wife, I was impressed by the singular neatness and the air of refinement in his home. It was in a small house, in one of the pleasant and silent neighborhoods far from the centre of the town, and though slightly and cheaply furnished, every

thing in it was so tasteful and so fitly disposed, that it seemed altogether suitable for a man of genius. For this, and for most of the comforts he enjoyed in his brightest as well as his darkest years, he was chiefly indebted to his mother-in-law, who loved him with more than maternal devotion and constancy."

Mr. Graham informs us that he saw him almost daily for eighteen months, much of the time writing or conversing at the same desk, and knowing all his hopes, his fears, and little annoyances of life, as well as his high-hearted struggle with adverse fate, and that he was always the same polished gentleman, the quiet, unobtrusive, thoughtful scholar, the devoted husband, frugal in his personal expenses, punctual and unwearied in his industry, and the soul of honor in all his transactions. "I shall never forget how solicitous of the happiness of his wife and mother-in-law he was whilst one of the editors of *Graham's Magazine;* his whole efforts seemed to be to procure the comfort and welfare of his home. Except for their happiness, and the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, I never heard him deplore the want of wealth. The truth is, he cared little for money, and knew less of its value, for he seemed to have no personal expenses. What he received from me, in regular monthly instalments, went directly into the hands of his mother-in-law, for family comforts, and twice only I remember his purchasing some rather expensive luxuries for his house, and then he was nervous to the degree of misery until he had, by extra

articles, covered what he considered an imprudent indebtedness. His love for his wife was a sort of rapturous worship of the spirit of beauty, which he felt was fading before his eyes. I have seen him hovering around her when she was ill, with all the fond fear and tender anxiety of a mother for her first-born, her slightest cough causing him a shudder, a heart-chill that was visible. I rode out, one summer evening, with them, and the remembrance of his watchful eyes eagerly bent upon the slightest change of hue in that loved face, haunts me yet as the memory of a sad strain. It was the hourly anticipation of her loss that made him a sad and thoughtful man, and lent a mournful melody to his undying song."

The description of Poe's residence by Mr. Clarke, Poe's third reminiscent, hardly bears out the idea of the poverty which we associate with him at this time, and to which he referred so feelingly in his letter to Mr. Thomas. The house in which he lived had a garden-like space in front, which, in summer, was overflowing with vines, while the house itself in winter was ornamented with choice flowers. The hospitality of Poe made his home the home of his friends, and endeared his household to that of Mr. Clarke, who were much attached to Mrs. Poe, whose hours of sickness were a source of anxiety to all who knew her. Patient in her loneliness, her face was lighted with a smile of resignation, and with a cheerful greeting to her friends. Mr. Clarke mentions an instance of her playful buoyancy of spirits which it is pleasant to remember: "Our little

daughter, passing the day with her favorite friend, enlivened the hours with her childish songs. There was one which she hinted knowledge of, but positively refused to sing, and it was not until after repeated solicitations from Virginia that the child ventured upon—

'I never would be married, and be called Mistress Poe, Goody Poe.'

'Mistress Poe' received the song with peal upon peal of laughter, and insisted, in her exuberance of spirits, on having the homely melody repeated. Upon parting, Virginia gave the child a keepsake, which the recipient, no longer a child, now cherishes in memory of the fair and gentle donor. On leaving Philadelphia for New York, when breaking up their simple, fairy-like home, we were favored with some of their pet flowers, which, preserved and framed, remain in our household to this day as interesting relics of those happy days with Edgar and Virginia."

Poe had, for several years, cherished what Mr. Graham called the natural ambition of having a magazine of his own, and, after he had ceased to be the editor of *Graham's Magazine*, he set to work to accomplish that object. The first title which suggested itself for the projected periodical, "The Penn Magazine," was finally abandoned as being somewhat too local in its suggestions, and "The Stylus" was adopted in its stead. Poe drew up a prospectus in which the necessity of a monthly journal like "The Stylus" was set forth; its size, typography, and so on

Philadelphia
August 15th

My Dear Sir,

On the other leaf of this sheet you will find the Prospectus of a Magazine which I am about attempting to establish, and of which the first number will be issued on the first of January next. When I was editor of the Southern Messenger you were so kind as to use your influence in behalf of that Journal, although I had myself no proprietary right in it and derived only a collateral benefit from your exertions. May I ask you to assist me in the present instance? Your brothers in Minnesota have kindly offered me every aid in their power, and I have reason to hope that you will also feel inclined to do so for the sake of the relationship which exists between us, and for the honor of our family name. Upon looking over my Prospectus I trust you will find my purposes, as expressed in it, of a character worthy your support. I am actuated by an ambition which I believe to be an honourable one — the ambition of serving the great cause of truth, while endeavouring to forward the literature of the country. You are aware that hitherto my circumstances, as regards pecuniary matters, have been bad. In fact, my path in life has been beset with difficulties from which I hope to emerge by this effort. So far, my exertions have served only to enhance my literary reputation in some degree and to benefit <u>others</u> so far as money was concerned. If I succeed in the present attempt, however, fortune & fame must go hand in hand — and for these reasons I now most earnestly solicit your support. My chances of establishing the Magazine depend upon my getting a certain number of subscribers previously to the first of December. This is rendered necessary by my having no other capital to begin with than whatever reputation I may have acquired as a literary man. Had I money, I might issue the first numbers without this list; but as it is, at least 500 names will be required to enable me to commence. I have no doubt in the world that this number can be obtained among those friends who aided me in the Messenger; but still it behooves me to use every exertion to ensure success. I think it very probable that your influence in Macon will procure for me several subscribers, and, if so, you will render me a service for which I shall always be grateful. Remember me kindly to your family, and believe me Yours most truly

Edgar A. Poe

were described; and its general intentions defined. It would discuss the Belles-Letters, the Fine Arts, and the Drama, and give every month a Retrospect of our Political Situation. It would support the general interests of the Republic of Letters, would resist the dictation of Foreign Reviews, and would eschew the stilted dulness of our own Quarterlies. An important feature, and one which would be introduced in the opening number, would be a series of Critical and Biographical Sketches of American Writers, which would be accompanied with full-length and characteristic portraits; would include every person of literary note in America; and would investigate carefully, and with vigorous impartiality, the individual claims of each. This prospectus, which was signed by "Clarke & Poe," was preceded, or followed, by an agreement between these parties and Mr. Felix O. C. Darley, the artist, who agreed to furnish, not more than five, nor less than three, original designs for "The Stylus" monthly, for a certain sum per drawing, the amounts to be paid quarterly, beginning from the date of the agreement, which was "this thirty-first day of January, A. D., one thousand eight hundred and forty-three (1843)."

The impracticability of Poe (and I cannot but think of Mr. Clarke also) was shown in a visit which Poe made to Washington in the spring of this year (March, 1843), in order to interest President Tyler and his Cabinet in the success of "The Stylus." It was an absurd idea, and it resulted in nothing but in the sending of Poe back to

Philadelphia by his friends. Disappointed in his editorial aspirations, he returned to literature, and obtaining from Mr. Graham a story entitled "The Gold Bug," which he had sold him for his periodical, he sent it to *The Dollar Magazine*, of Philadelphia, which had offered a prize of one hundred dollars for the best prose story, which prize he immediately carried off from all competitors, as he had carried off the prize of the *Saturday Visitor* some nine or ten years before. This, I believe, was shortly after his return from Washington. In the following autumn he made his appearance as a lecturer in Baltimore and Philadelphia, his subject being the thorny one of American Poetry. His lecture, which aroused the ire of Dr. Griswold, was kindly mentioned in print by his friend, Mr. Clarke, who was connected with a publication called *The Museum*. "We have not leisure this week," he wrote, "to give even a brief outline of the lecture, the character of which may be inferred from the reputation which Mr. Poe has so extensively enjoyed as a severe and impartial critic. Added to this important qualification, the fact of the lecturer himself possessing talents as a poet of a high order, and therefore more capable of more truly appreciating his subject with great analytical power, and that command of language and strength of voice which enables a speaker to give full expression to whatever he may desire to say, it will readily be perceived that the lecturer, on Tuesday evening, combined qualities which are rarely associated in a public speaker. With the ex-

FAC-SIMILE OF LETTER TO T. C. CLARKE.

Washington — March 11. 1843.

My Dear Sir

I write merely to inform you of my well-doing-for, as far, I have done nothing. My friend Thomas, upon whom I depended, is sick. I suppose he will be well in a few days. In the meantime, I shall have to do the best I can. I have not seen the President yet.

My expenses were more than I thought they would be, although I have economised in every respect, and this delay (Thomas' being sick) puts me out sadly. However all is going right. I have got the subscriptions of all the Departments — President! [redacted] &c I believe that I am making a sensation which will tend to the benefit of the Magazine.

Day after to-morrow I am to lecture.

Rob. Tyler is to give me an article also. Upshur

Send me $10 by mail, as soon as you get this. I am grieved to ask you [redacted] for money, in this way — but you will find your account in it — twice over.

Very truly yours

Edgar A. Poe

Thos. C. Clarke Esqr

ception of some occasional severity, which, however merited, may have appeared somewhat too personal, the lecturer gave general satisfaction, especially the portions in which the eloquent sonnets of Judge Conrad on the Lord's Prayer were introduced. The judicious reading of these created a marked sensation." It was, no doubt, an honor to Judge Conrad to have his sacred effusions read by so distinguished a critic as Poe, but it was of no avail to his reputation, such as it was, which was based upon a melodrama which was written by him for Mr. Edwin Forrest, and which is seldom or never played now. He was one of Poe's successors on *Graham's Magazine*, and died in 1858, in his forty-eighth year.

Poe and his family flitted back to New York late in the summer, or early in the autumn of 1844. Precisely what led to his change of residence is not intelligently stated; but it was probably the hope of more literary employment than he could obtain in Philadelphia. It was certainly a reasonable hope, for, not to speak of the journals of New York, the number of which largely exceeded that of Philadelphia, it maintained several periodicals, among which may be mentioned the *Democratic Review*, *The Knickerbocker*, *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, *The Columbian*, and *The Lady's Companion*. Where he first set up his household (minus the pet flowers, which he had left with the family of Mr. Clarke) I am unable to state, for during his five years' residence in New York, his name at no time appears in the City Directory. It is safe to say that he

was as well known as any American magazinist, and that he stood well with the literary brotherhood, in spite of his reputation as a savage critic. If any of the craft had reason to complain of his criticisms, it was Mr. Longfellow, who was too popular, however, to be affected by them. He was on the best of terms with Mr. James Russell Lowell, who wrote at his suggestion a biography of him for a future number of *Graham's Magazine*, and announced the fact in the following letter, which is the first that I have seen addressed to Poe at this period.

"ELMWOOD, September 27, 1844.

"MY DEAR FRIEND:—I kept back the biography a short time in order to send it on by a private hand. It is not half so good as it ought to be, but it was written under many disadvantages, not the least of which was depression of spirits, which unfits a man for any thing. I wish you to make any suggestions about it that may occur to you, and to reject it entirely if you do not like it.

"I have mentioned Chatterton in it rather too slightingly; will you be good enough to modify what I said of him a little? His 'Minstrel's Song in Ella' is better than the rest of his writings.

"You will find the package at No. 1 Nassau Street, *up-stairs*. It was addressed to the care of *C. F. Briggs*. If his name is not upon the door, you will probably see the name of 'Dougherty' or 'Jones.' As ever, your friend,

"J. R. Lowell."

The first known literary employment of any account

which Poe is known to have obtained in New York was upon the *New Mirror*, of which Mr. Willis and Mr. George P. Morris were the nominal editors. It was, I believe, a continuation of the *New York Mirror*, an entertaining literary miscellany for which Mr. Willis had written his famous "Pencillings by the Way" about ten years before, and which, in its new form, held a good place among the evening journals of America. Poe was engaged as a critic and sub-editor by Messrs. Willis and Morris, who now made their first personal acquaintance with him, and he was associated with them for several months, which covered, I imagine, the latter part of the autumn of 1844 and the early part of the winter of 1845. If the recollections of Mr. Willis were accurate, Poe was a suburban citizen of New York. "He resided with his wife and mother at Fordham, a few miles out of town, but was at his desk in the office from nine in the morning till the evening paper went to press. With the highest admiration for his genius, and a willingness to let it atone for more than ordinary irregularity, we were led by common report to expect a very capricious attention to his duties, and occasionally a scene of violence and difficulty. Time went on, however, and he was invariably punctual and industrious. With his pale, beautiful, and intellectual face, as a reminder of what genius was in him, it was impossible, of course, not to treat him with deferential courtesy; and, to our occasional request that he would not probe too deep in a criticism, or that he would erase

a passage colored too highly with his resentments against society and mankind, he readily and courteously assented —far more yielding than most men, we thought, on points so excusably sensitive. With the prospect of taking the lead in another periodical, he at last voluntarily gave up his employment with us, and, through all this considerable period, we had seen but one presentment of the man—a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability."

Poe's reputation when he came to New York the second time depended mostly on his tales, a walk of literature in which he may be said to have stood alone—for Hawthorne, who had published the second series of his "Twice-Told Tales" two years before, was still the most obscure man in America—and upon his critical notices, which continued to hit the taste of the reading public; but his reputation as a poet had yet to be determined. Reputation of a certain sort he had no doubt, but it was confined among a few, and was inferior to that of Mr. Bryant, Mr. Longfellow, and Mr. Halleck, and, possibly, to that of Mr. Willis and Mr. Morris. He had yet to show what he could do—to write one poem about which there could be no dispute, and which would make him famous. It appeared anonymously in the *American Review*, for February, 1845, but was at once attributed by the judicious to the only man in America who could have written it. Of course I refer to "The Raven," which

Home Journal office
Nov 12.

My dear Poe

I could not find time possibly to go to the Concert, but why did you not send the paragraph yourself. You knew of course that it would go in.

I had a letter, not long since, from your sister enquiring where you were, & supposing you had moved, I could not inform her. You seem as neglectful of your sister as I am of mine, but private letters are "the last ounce that breaks the camel's back" of a literary man.

Yours very truly

N. P. Willis

was credited to an unknown versifier—"Quarles," whose effusion was commended to the readers of the *American Review* in this clumsy fashion: "The following lines from a correspondent, besides the quaint strain of the sentiment, and the curious introduction of some ludicrous touches amidst the serious and impressive, as was doubtless intended by the author—appear to us one of the most felicitious specimens of unique rhyming which has for some time met our eye. The resources of English rhythm for variations of melody, measure, and sound, producing corresponding diversities of effect, have been thoroughly studied, much more perceived, by very few poets in the language. While the classic tongues, especially the Greek, possess, by power of accent, several advantages for versification over our own, chiefly through greater abundance of spondaic feet, we have other and very great advantages of sound by the modern usage of rhyme. Alliteration is nearly the only effect of the kind which the ancients had in common with us. It will be seen that much of the melody of 'The Raven' arises from alliteration, and the studious use of similar sounds in unusual places. In regard to its measure, it may be noted that, if all the verses were like the second, they might possibly be placed in short lines, producing a not uncommon form; but the presence in all the others of one line—mostly the second in the verse—which flows continuously, with only an aspirate pause in the middle, like that before the short line in the Sapphic Adonic, while

the fifth has at the middle pause no similarity of sound with any part besides, gives the versification an entirely different effect. We could wish the capacity of our noble language in prosody were better understood." This curious, not to say bewildering introduction, which was signed by the editor of the *American Review*, if not written, was certainly inspired, by Poe.

"The Raven" was published anonymously, as I have said, by Mr. Willis, who was in the secret of its authorship, transferred it to his journal as the production of Poe, and gave it the following send-off; "We regard it as the most effective single example of fugitive poetry ever published in this country, and it is unsurpassed in English poetry for the subtle conception, masterly ingenuity of versification, and consistent sustaining of imaginative lift." It was widely copied in the papers of the day, and, if any thing can ever be said to be talked about, in so commercial a country as this, it was a frequent subject of conversation. It enlarged Poe's circle of acquaintance among the literati of New York, and introduced him to a new set of admirers. Among others whom it drew to him was Mrs. Frances Sargent Osgood, the most airy and graceful of American female poets, whose reminiscences of Poe are extant in print. "My first meeting with the poet was at the Astor House. A few days previous, Mr. Willis had handed me, at the *table d' hote*, that strange and thrilling poem entitled 'The Raven,' saying that the author wanted my opinion on it. Its effect upon me was

so singular, so like that of 'wierd, unearthly music,' that it was with a feeling almost of dread I heard he desired an introduction. Yet I could not refuse without seeming ungrateful, because I had just heard of his enthusiastic and partial eulogy of my writings, in his lecture on American Literature. I shall never forget the morning when I was summoned to the drawing-room by Mr. Willis to receive him. With his proud and beautiful head erect, his dark eyes flashing with the elective light of feeling and thought, a peculiar, an inimitable blending of sweetness and hauteur in his expression and manner, he greeted me calmly, gravely, almost coldly; yet with so marked an earnestness that I could not help being deeply impressed by it. From that moment until his death we were friends; although we met only during the first year of our acquaintance. And in his last words, ere Reason had forever left her imperial throne in that overtasked brain, I have a touching memento of his undying faith and friendship."

Poe's introduction to Mrs. Osgood must have taken place several weeks after the original publication of "The Raven," for the lecture on American Literature to which she referred was delivered at the Society Library in the following month (March, 1845). About this time, or probably a little later, the Raven had taken flight to England, where it met the eye of Miss Elizabeth Barrett Barrett, who had recently published the first collected edition of her poetical writings, and who expressed her

opinion of this ominous bird of yore in a letter addressed, I believe, to Poe: "This vivid writing"—she remarked, "this *power which is felt*—has produced a sensation here in England. Some of my friends are taken by the fear of it, and some by the music. I hear of persons who are haunted by the 'Nevermore,' and an acquaintance of mine who had the misfortune of possessing a bust of Pallas cannot bear to look at it in the twilight." Miss Barrett Barrett's private opinion of "The Raven," which she communicated freely, May 12, 1845, to Mr. Richard Hengist Horne, the author of "Orion," was less favorable. "Your friend, Mr. Poe, is a speaker of strong words in both kinds. But I hope you will assure him from me that I am grateful for his reviews, and in no complaining humor at all. As to 'The Raven' tell me what you think about it! There is certainly a power—but it does not appear to me the natural expression of a sane intellect in whatever mood; and I think this should be specified in the title of the poem. There is a fantasticalness about the 'sir or madam,' and things of the sort, which is ludicrous, unless there is a specified insanity to justify the straws. Probably he—the author—intended it to be read in the poem, and he ought to have intended it. The rhythm acts excellently upon the imagination, and the 'nevermore' has a solemn chime with it. Don't get me into a scrape. The 'pokerishness' (just gods! what Mohawk English!) might be found fatal, peradventure. Besides—just because I have been criticised, I would not criticise,

And I am of opinion that there is an uncommon force and effect in the poem." Miss Barrett Barrett declined to criticise, because she had been criticised, but she could not resist telling her correspondent that Poe seemed to her in a great mist on the subject of metre, and that he sat somewhat loosely on his classics, inasmuch as he had attributed the "Œdipus Colonœus" to Æschylus. If she had cared to dwell upon the subject of metre, she might have intimated that the measure of "The Raven" (in spite of the difference between them) had evidently been suggested by the measure of her "Lady Geraldine's Courtship," and might have produced a verbal proof that Poe had read that poem before writing his own. The resemblance between one of her lines and one of his lines is too close to be accidental. Here it is:

"With a rustling stir, uncertain in the air, the purple curtain"
(E. B. B.)

"And the silken, sad, uncertain rustling of each purple curtain"
(E. A. P.)

Poe has told us how he came to write "The Raven," in a prose paper entitled "The Philosophy of Composition," but for one, I have never been able to persuade myself that it was so written. The vocal value of the refrain "Nevermore," upon which he lays so much stress, is undoubted; but unfortunately for him, its vocal value had been discovered four or five years before by Mr. Lowell in his "Threnodia," of which it is the refrain. The use of the refrain, by the way, is not so universal as Poe would

have us believe in "The Philosophy of Composition," nor do I think it ever likely to become so, for the more it is used the more artificial its effect becomes. If one could fix the date of the old English and Scottish ballads of which it is so important a feature, one might approximate to the date of its origin. A very early use of it, in what may be called poetic as distinguished from ballad literature, occurs in the old poem of "The Nut-Brown Maid," which goes back to the beginning of the sixteenth century. Readers of Shakespeare will recall it in the delightful songs of Hiems and Ver at the end of "Love's Labor's Lost"; in the ditty sung by Balthazar in the second act of "Much Ado About Nothing" ("Sigh no more, ladies"); in the clown's song at the end of "The Twelfth Night" ("When that I was and a little tiny boy"); in the songs of Amiens in "As You Like It" ("Under the greenwood tree," and "Blow, blow, thou winter wind"); and in the willow song of Desdemona in the fourth act of "Othello." It twinkles, in easy French, in the song of Infida in Greene's "Never Too Late" (1590); it is radiant in the perfect little hymn to Diana in Jonson's "Cynthia's Revels" (1600); and it lends a pastoral charm to one of Sedley's lyrics in praise of his Phillis:

> "Phillis, without frown or smile,
> Sat and knotted all the while."

It was more highly valued, I think, by the poets of Scotland than those of England, among whom it gradually

fell into disuse, the most prominent modern exception to the rule being the young Tennyson, in his two songs to the Owl, the "Recollections of the Arabian Nights," "The Sisters," and "The Ballad of Oriana." The young Longfellow transplanted it into American literature in a spirited translation of a little German song ("I know a maiden fair to see") in his "Hyperion," which was published in the year that Mr. Lowell wrote his "Threnodia" (1839), and five years before Poe wrote "The Raven." The most striking of all Poe's poems, "The Raven," was originally printed substantially as it stands now, with the exception of the eleventh stanza, which concluded as follows:

> "Followed fast and followed faster, so when Hope he would abjure,
> Stern Despair returned, instead of the sweet Hope he dared abjure—
> The sad answer—'Nevermore.'"

The month of February, 1845, was an important epoch in the career of Poe, for in addition to the publication of "The Raven," it witnessed the publication of his biography by Mr. Lowell in the pages of *Graham's Magazine*. It was a generous tribute from one man of genius to another, but it was singularly inaccurate in several important particulars. It stated, for example, that Poe was graduated with the highest honors of his class at the University of Virginia, when he was never graduated at all, no provision for conferring degrees of any kind having been made while he was a student there. It mentioned a boyish attempt on his part to join the fortunes of the in-

surgent Greeks, which ended at St. Petersburg, where he got into difficulties through want of a passport, from which he was rescued by the American Consul and sent home—a romantic adventure which had no foundation in fact, other than that something of the sort is said to have happened to his brother William Henry. It stated, further, that he obtained a dismissal from West Point on hearing of the birth of a son to his adopted father, the fact being that he was expelled for gross neglect of all duties and disobedience of orders. It stated, also, that the booklet of verse which he printed at Boston in 1827, and which he declared in his Baltimore volume had been suppressed through circumstances of a private nature, soon ran through three editions, and excited high expectations of its author's future distinction in the minds of many competent judges! It contained a reprint of the lines "To Helen" ("Helen, thy beauty is to me"), the date of which was put back from the year in which they were first printed (1831), to 1823, his fourteenth year; and it purported to quote twelve lines from a poem named "Ligeia," when they were really quoted from the second part of "Al Aaraaf." With the exception of these trifling inaccuracies, Mr. Lowell's paper was calculated to advance the reputation of Poe, and no doubt did so, for not long after it appeared, he made a collection of his poems which was published in New York, as well as a selection from his stories. He was in demand with the *American Review*, in the April number of which he laid his useful New York

volume under contribution by reproducing "The Valley of Nis" as "The Valley of Unrest," and "The Doomed City" as "The City in the Sea,"

His ambition, as we have seen, was to have a periodical of his own, and it was with this intention that he separated from Messrs. Willis and Morris, and became connected with *The Broadway Journal*. This periodical, a weekly about the size of *The Nation*, was commenced in January, 1845, and edited by Mr. Henry C. Watson, a young journalist from Philadelphia, whose specialty was musical criticism, and Mr. Charles F. Briggs, well known in New York as a clever journalist, and as the author of "Harry Franco" and "The Trippings of Tom Pepper." Poe joined forces with them in the spring of 1845, and exploited himself as a metropolitan journalist. Read in the light of to-day, *The Broadway Journal* is a curious medley of good and bad writing, the bad, I think, predominating. It was savagely critical and bitterly personal, and dignity was absent from its columns. It astonished and amused its readers, which was probably all that Poe cared for. That he was continually in hot water on account of it could not have surprised and could hardly have amused him. It was useful to him, however, if to be feared is ever useful to a man of letters.

It was while he was one of the editors of *The Broadway Journal* that I became acquainted with Poe, and my remembrances of him, slight as they are, must be the excuse, if any is needed, for the apparent egotism of what

follows. I was a young man, and I had a weakness not wholly confined to young men—I wrote verse and thought it poetry. Something I had written assumed that pleasing form to my deluded imagination. It was an "Ode on a Grecian Flute." I have a strong suspicion that I was fresh from the reading of Keats, and that I particularly admired his "Ode on a Grecian Urn." Be this as it may, I sent my Ode to *The Broadway Journal*, I presume, with a note addressed to Edgar A. Poe, Esq., and awaited with fear and trembling. One week, two weeks passed, and it did not appear. Evidently the demand for odes was slack. When I could bear my disappointment no longer, I made time to take a long walk to the office of *The Broadway Journal*, and asked for Mr. Poe. He was not in. Might I inquire where he lived? I was directed to a street and number that I have forgotten, but it was in the eastern part of the city, a neighborhood now given up to sundry of the tribes of Israel. I knocked at the street-door, and was presently shown up to Poe's rooms, on the second or third floor. He received me very kindly. I told my errand, and he promised that my Ode should be printed next week. I was struck with his poetic manner, and the elegance of his appearance. He was slight and pale, I saw, with large luminous eyes, and was dressed in black. When I quitted the room, I could not but see his wife, who was lying on a bed, apparently asleep. She, too, was dressed in black, and was pale and wasted, "Poor lady," I thought, "she is dying

of consumption." I was sad on her account, but glad on my own: for had I not seen a real live author, the great Edgar Allen Poe, and was not my Ode to be published at once in his paper?

I bought the next number of *The Broadway Journal*, but my Ode was not in it. It was mentioned, however, somewhat in this style: "We decline to publish the 'Ode on a Grecian Flute,' unless we can be assured of its authenticity." I was astounded, as almost any young man would have been. I was indignant, also. I made time to take another long walk to the office of *The Broadway Journal*, and asked again for Mr. Poe. I was told that he was out, but would probably return in half an hour. I sauntered about, heating myself in the hot sun, and went back at the end of an hour. Poe had returned, and was in the inner office. He was sitting on a chair asleep, but the publisher woke him. He was in a morose mood. "Mr. Poe," I said, "I have called to assure you of the authenticity of the 'Ode on a Grecian Flute.' He gave me the lie direct, declared that I never wrote it, and threatened to chastise me unless I left him at once. I was more indignant and astounded than before; but I left him as he desired, and walked slowly home, "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies." I could not understand why I had been subjected to such an indignity. I think I can now when I come to ponder over the matter. I was rather flattered than otherwise, for had not the great Poe declared that I did not write the poem, when I knew that I did? What a genius I must be!

I had glimpses of Poe afterward in the streets, but we never spoke. The last time that I remember to have seen him was in the afternoon of a dreary autumn day. A heavy shower had come up suddenly, and he was standing under an awning. I had an umbrella, and my impulse was to share it with him on his way home; but something—certainly not unkindness—withheld me. I went on and left him there in the rain, pale, shivering, miserable, the embodiment of his own unhappy master,

"Whom unmerciful Disaster followed fast and followed faster."

If there had been any quarrel between Poe and Dr. Griswold, it was smoothed over shortly after Poe's residence in New York, by a bulky volume upon which the reverend compiler was then engaged. This was "The Prose Writers of America," in which Poe was naturally desirous of being represented. He addressed a note to Dr. Griswold, on January 10, 1845, in which he said, "Unless your opinions of my literary character are entirely changed, you will, I think, like something of mine, and you are welcome to whatever best pleases you, if you will permit me to furnish a corrected copy; but with your present feelings you can hardly do me justice in any criticism, and I shall be glad if you simply say after my name: Born, 1811; published 'Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque' in 1839; has resided latterly in New York." Dr. Griswold stated in his reply that he did not, under any circumstances, permit his personal relations to

influence the expression of his opinion as a critic, and inclosed to Poe the proof-sheets of what he had written before he received his note. Poe responded becomingly, and invited him to call upon him about ten, any morning, at the office of the *Mirror*. It is to be presumed he did so, and that a friendly understanding was arrived at. At any rate, letters were exchanged as if nothing had happened, and "copy" was supplied for the forthcoming work. "I send you with this another package," Poe wrote on February 24th. "It contains, in the way of essay, 'Mesmeric Revelation,' which I would like to have go in, even if you have to omit the 'House of Usher.' I send also corrected proofs (in the way of funny criticism, but you don't like this),—'Flaccus,' which conveys a tolerable idea of my style; and of my serious manner 'Barnaby Rudge' is a good specimen. In the tale line, 'The Murders in The Rue Morgue,' 'The Gold Bug,' and 'The Man that was Used Up'—far more than enough; but you can select to suit yourself. I prefer the 'G. B.' to the 'M. in the R. M.' I have taken a third interest in *The Broadway Journal*, and will be glad if you could send me any thing for it. Why not let me anticipate the book publication of your splendid essay on Milton?"

The third interest which Poe had taken in *The Broadway Journal*, when this letter was written, became a complete interest in the following autumn, when he was the sole proprietor. It was a curious medley, as I have said, but it was useful to its editor, in that it enabled him to

reproduce what he had published elsewhere. If I may judge of the two volumes to which it extended by the second, which is the only one that I have seen, he reprinted in it nearly every thing that he had written. His old stories turn up continually, some with his name, others without, and others, again, over the signature of "Littleton Barry." The same resurrection awaited his old poems. It was an easy way of supplying "copy," and it kept him before his countrymen.

About the time that he assumed control of *The Broadway Journal*, Poe was invited to read a poem before the Boston Lyceum. He accepted the invitation, with the intention of writing a poem before the evening for delivery came, but his mind refused to honor the draft that he presented upon it. In this dilemma he sought the assistance of his friend, Mrs. Osgood, who was known to write verse with great rapidity, and who he was sure could furnish him with a poem that would be equal to his reputation. She promised to assist him, but being an invalid failed, leaving him to extricate himself as best he could. He might have pleaded illness as a reason for not keeping his engagement, and it would have been wise for him, no doubt, to have done so, but he was audacious enough to trust to luck. He went to Boston, therefore, and, instead of reading a poem written for the occasion, read "Al Aaraaf," and concluded by reciting "The Raven." This proceeding of his, which he designated a hoax, was not well received by several Boston journals, which com-

mented upon it severely. It was followed by a war of words, in which *The Broadway Journal* participated, not much to the credit of Poe, I think, but with a certain vulgar smartness that increased the original offence. Poe's defence of himself was simply an arraignment of the Bostonians for their stupidity, but it contained two remarkable statements, one of which was a fact, the other of which was a fiction,—namely, that he was born in Boston, and that "Al Aaraaf" was written, printed, and published by him in book form before he had fairly completed his tenth year. "Were the question demanded of us, 'What is the most exquisite of sublunary pleasures?' we should reply without hesitation, the making a fuss, or, in the classical words of a Western friend, the 'kicking up a bobbery.'" So wrote Poe, who certainly succeeded in kicking up a bobbery with *The Broadway Journal*, though he did not succeed in keeping it alive, for it dwindled, peaked, and pined, and died on January 3, 1846.

We have pleasanter reminiscences of Poe than are associated with *The Broadway Journal*, whether he represented himself editorially, as to me, in his office in Clinton Hall, or poetically, as on the rostrum at the Boston Lyceum, and they concern his social sweetness and light in New York. We are largely indebted for them to Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, who eleven years after his death published a loving defence of his memory ("Edgar Poe and his Critics." New York, 1860). He was often seen, Mrs. Whitman relates, at the brilliant literary circles in

Waverley Place, where weekly reunions of noted artists and men of letters, at the house of an accomplished poetess, attracted some of the best intellectual society of the city, and where, shortly before its publication, he electrified the company by reciting "The Raven." He attended other literary circles at the house of Mr. James Lawson, and Dr. Orville Dewey, a well-known Unitarian clergyman, and was greatly admired by those who assembled there, among others by a woman of fine genius, from whom, without naming her, Mrs. Whitman quotes: "His manners were at these reunions refined and pleasing, and his style and scope of conversation that of a gentleman and a scholar. Whatever may have been his previous career, there was nothing in his appearance or manner to indicate his excesses. He delighted in the society of superior women, and had an exquisite perception of graces of manner and shades of expression. He was an admiring listener, and an unobtrusive observer. We all recollect the interest felt at the time in every thing emanating from his pen—the relief it was from the dulness of ordinary writers—the certainty of something fresh and suggestive. His critiques were read with avidity; not that he convinced the judgment, but that people felt their ability and their courage. Right or wrong, he was terribly in earnest." Mrs. Whitman recalls an incident which occurred at one of these soirées, and upon which she dwells as an evidence of Poe's habitual courtesy and good nature in social life. "A lady, noted for her great

lingual attainments, wishing to apply a wholesome check to the vanity of a young author, proposed inviting him to translate for the company a difficult passage in Greek, of which language she knew him to be profoundly ignorant, although given to a rather pretentious display of Greek quotations in his published writings. Poe's earnest and persistent remonstrance against this piece of *méchanceté* alone averted the embarrassing test." Mrs. Poe was sometimes seen with her husband in Waverley Place, and was long remembered for her sweet and girlish face, though she seldom took part in the conversation.

After the discontinuance of *The Broadway Journal*, Poe wrote a series of papers entitled "The Literati of New York," which ran through six numbers of Godey's *Lady's Book*, a Philadelphia periodical of considerable circulation. It was a risky undertaking, considering the disfavor with which his criticisms were received, but it was thoroughly characteristic of Poe, whom it enabled to kick up another bobbery.

We have a glimpse of him while he was writing these papers, which is not only pleasant in itself, but of biographical interest, in that it localizes him for the first time during his residence in New York. It is from the pen of Mrs Osgood, to whom he was always all that was good. "It was in his own simple yet poetical home that, to me, the character of Edgar Poe appeared in its most beautiful light. Playful, affectionate, witty, alternately docile and wayward as a petted child—for his young, gentle, and

idolized wife, and for all who came, he had, even in the midst of his most harassing literary duties, a kind word, a pleasant smile, a graceful and courteous attention. At his desk, beneath the romantic picture of his loved and lost Lenore, he would sit, hour after hour, patient, assiduous, and uncomplaining, tracing, in an exquisitely clear chirography, and with almost superhuman swiftness, the lightning thoughts—the 'rare and radiant' fancies as they flashed through his wonderful and ever-wakeful brain. I recollect one morning, toward the close of his residence in this city, when he seemed unusually gay and light-hearted. Virginia, his sweet wife, had written me a pressing invitation to come to them; and I, who never could resist her affectionate summons, and who enjoyed his society far more in his own home than elsewhere, hastened to Amity Street. I found him just completing his series of papers, entitled 'The Literati of New York.' 'See,' said he, displaying in triumph several little rolls of narrow paper (he always wrote thus for the press), 'I am going to show you, by the difference of length in these, the different degrees of estimation in which I hold all you literary people. In each of these one of you is rolled up and fully discussed. Come, Virginia, help me.' And one by one they unfolded them. At last they came to one which seemed interminable. Virginia laughingly ran to one corner of the room with one end, and her husband to the opposite with the other. 'And whose lengthened sweetness long drawn out is that?' said I. 'Hear her!'

Poe Cottage AT Fordham

he cried, 'just as if her little vain heart did n't tell her it 's herself.' "

Poe moved back to Fordham early in the summer of 1846, and no doubt pursued his literary avocations there, though they have not been traced out for us. We know more of Poe, the man, than of Poe, the author, during the rest of this year, and more of his surroundings than of either. His residence has been described by several who appear to have visited it, but whose names have not been preserved with their reminiscences. From one of these anonymous writers (for such we must consider them) I quote what follows—I am sorry to say at second or third hand, and with evident omissions which I am not able to supply: "We found him and his wife's mother, who was his aunt, living in a little cottage at the top of a hill. There was an acre or two of greensward fenced in about the house, as smooth as velvet and as clean as the best-kept carpet. There were some grand old cherry-trees in the yard that threw a majestic shade around them. Poe had somehow caught a full-grown bobolink. He had put him in a cage, which he had hung on a nail driven into the trunk of a cherry-tree. The poor bird was as unfit to live in a cage as his captor was to live in the world. He was as restless as his jailer, and sprang continually in a fierce, frightened way from one side of the cage to the other. I pitied him, but Poe was bent on training him. There he stood, with his arms crossed, before the tormented bird, his sublime trust in attaining the impossible

apparent in his whole self. So handsome, so impassive in his wonderful, intellectual beauty, so proud and reserved, and yet so confidentially communicative, so entirely a gentleman upon all occasions that I ever saw him ; so tasteful, so good a talker was Poe, that he impressed himself and his wishes, even without words, upon those with whom he spoke. * * * Poe's voice was melody itself. He always spoke low, even in a violent discussion, compelling his hearers to listen if they would know his opinions, his facts, fancies, philosophy, or his weird imaginings. These last usually flowed from his pen, seldom from his tongue. On this occasion I was introduced to the young wife of the poet and to the mother, then more than sixty years of age. She was a tall, dignified old lady, with a most lady-like manner, and her black dress, though old and much worn, looked really elegant on her. * * * Mrs. Poe looked very young ; she had large, black eyes, and a pearly whiteness of complexion which was a perfect pallor. The pale face, her brilliant eyes, and her raven hair, gave her an unearthly look. One felt that she was almost a disrobed spirit, and when she coughed it was made certain that she was rapidly passing away. The mother seemed hale and strong, and appeared to be a sort of universal Providence for her strange children. The cottage had an air of taste and gentility that must have been lent it by the presence of its inmates. So neat, so poor, so unfurnished, and yet so charming a dwelling I never saw. * * * The sitting-room was

laid with check matting; four chairs, a light stand, and a hanging book-case completed its furniture. There were pretty presentation copies of books on the little shelves, and the Brownings had posts of honor on the stands. With quiet exultation, Poe drew from his side-pocket a letter which he had recently received from Elizabeth Barrett Browning. He read it to us. It was very flattering. She told Poe that his poem of 'The Raven' had awakened a fit of horror in England. * * * He was at this time greatly depressed. Their extreme poverty, the sickness of his wife, and his inability to write, sufficiently accounted for this. * * * We strolled away into the woods and had a very cheerful time, till some one proposed a game of leaping. I think it must have been Poe, as he was expert in the exercise. Two or three gentlemen agreed to leap with him, and though one of them was tall and had been a hunter in times past, Poe still distanced them all. But, alas! his gaiters, long worn and carefully kept, were both burst in the grand leap that made him victor. * * * I was certain he had no other shoes, boots, or gaiters. * * * If one had money, who had the effrontery to offer it to the poet?" If the recollection of the writer of this reminiscence is to be trusted, the visit described therein must have been made late in the autumn of 1846, for previous to that time Mrs. Browning was Miss Barrett Barrett. As regards the letter from that lady which Poe read to his visitors, I am inclined to think it was an old one, for I do not see why she should have written him

at this late period about "The Raven," concerning which she had already expressed her opinion.

Another writer who visited the residence of Poe in the summer of this year, described it as buried in fruit-trees, in the neighborhood of a thick grove of pines. Round an old cherry-tree near the door there was a bank of green turf, which the shadow of the tree and the scent of mignonette and heliotrope from beds near by made a pleasant seat. Poor as he was, Poe contrived to have pets about him, in the shape of rare flowers, tropical birds in cages, and a favorite cat, which used to seat itself on his shoulder while he was engaged in composition, and purr its complacent approval of his work.

From causes which are not explained, among which was, no doubt, inability to write—a disease which is more common to the literary profession than well-regulated men of the world are aware of,—Poe and his family were now overtaken by distress, which threatened to become want. Their necessities were made public by a paragraph in the *Evening Express:* "We regret to learn that Edgar A. Poe and his wife are both dangerously ill with the consumption, and that the hand of misfortune lies heavily on their temporal affairs. We are sorry to mention the fact that they are so far reduced as to be barely able to obtain the necessaries of life. This is indeed a hard lot, and we hope that the friends and admirers of Mr. Poe will come promptly to his assistance in his bitterest hour of need." Mr. Willis made this paragraph the text for a homily in

the *Home Journal*, on the necessity for a hospital for disabled laborers with brain, and gave it an individual application. "Here is one of the finest scholars, one of the most original men of genius, and one of the most industrious of the literary profession of our country, whose temporary suspension of labor—from bodily labor, from bodily illness, drops him immediately to a level with the common objects of public charity. There was no intermediate stopping-place—no respectful shelter where, with the delicacy due to genius and culture, he might secure aid, unadvertised, till, with returning health, he could resume his labors and his unmortified sense of independence. He must either apply to individual friends (a resource to which death is sometimes almost preferable), or *suffer down* to the level where Charity receives claimants, but where Rags and Humiliation are the only Ushers to her presence. Is this right? Should there not be in all highly civilized communities, an institution designed expressly for educated and refined objects of charity—a hospital, a retreat, a home of seclusion and comfort, the sufficient claims to which would be such susceptibilities as are violated by the above-mentioned appeal in a daily newspaper?"

Shortly after the publication of this well-meant appeal, Poe wrote a letter to Mr. Willis, in which he referred to the paragraph in the *Express*, the motive of which he left to the conscience of him or her who wrote it, or suggested it. It was true that his wife was ill, but this illness,

hopeless from the first, had been heightened and precipitated by the reception, at two different periods, of anonymous letters. It was also true that he had been ill, and, as an inevitable consequence, in want of money, but that he had ever suffered from privation, beyond the extent of his capacity for suffering, was not true. That he was without friends was a gross calumny, which he was sure Mr. Willis never could have believed. He concluded by saying that he was getting better, and had little fear of getting worse. "The truth is I have a great deal to do; and I have made up my mind not to die till it is done." That Poe should have shrunk from the publicity which had been given to his affairs, and that he should have disclaimed the poverty which had been attributed to him, was natural to a proud man like himself; but, unhappily, his disclaimer was not true, and, happily, it was not believed to be true by his friends, one of whom (an authoress, concerning whose work he had written rather flippantly in his "Literati of New York") made a pilgrimage to Fordham in order to satisfy herself as to the condition of his family. She found Mrs. Poe in her bed-chamber, which was neat and clean, but poverty-stricken. "There was no clothing on the bed, which was only straw, but a snow-white spread and sheets. The weather was cold, and the sick lady had the dreadful chills that accompany the hectic fever of consumption. She lay on the straw bed, wrapped in her husband's great-coat, with a large tortoise-shell cat in her bosom. The wonderful cat seemed conscious of

her great usefulness. The coat and the cat were the sufferer's only means of warmth, except as her husband held her hands and her mother her feet. Mrs. Clemm was passionately fond of her daughter, and her distress on account of her illness, poverty, and misery was dreadful to see." Saddened by what she saw, this lady, who, I believe, was Mrs. Mary S. Gove Nichols, hastened back to New York, and, not being blessed with an abundance of means, went to one of her friends, a lady in better circumstances than herself, whom she interested in the poverty of the Poes, and who headed a subscription, and in a few days carried the sufferers sixty dollars, which at that time was no inconsiderable sum. From the vagueness of the reminiscences from which I derive these particulars, the personal identity of this good Samaritan remained undiscovered for upward of thirty years, her timely beneficence being attributed to, if not assumed by, a romantic American songstress, now resident in England. The writer of a paper in *Appletons' Journal* for May, 1878 ("Unpublished Correspondence of Edgar A. Poe"), has dissipated the delusion under which the world labored so long, and restored the honor of relieving Poe in his sore distress to the lady to whom it really belonged,—Mrs. Marie Louise Shew, of New York, a kindly gentlewoman, who became a ministering angel to his suffering family, who watched over them continually, and saw Mrs. Poe the day before she died. "When bidding good-bye to Mrs. Poe, the poet's wife took a portrait of her husband and gave it to

Mrs. Shew ; she also presented her with a little jewel-case that had belonged to his mother, and gave her two worn letters to read. They were from the wife of Poe's adopted father, and had been carefully preserved by Virginia as a means of exonerating her husband from the responsibility of domestic dissensions." This was on Friday, January 29, 1847. The *New York Herald* on the following Monday (February 1st) announced the death, on Saturday, 30th of January, of Virginia Eliza, wife of Edgar A. Poe, of pulmonary consumption, in the 25th year of her age, and that the funeral would take place on the ensuing day, at Fordham, Westchester County, for which cars would leave New York at 12 M., returning at 4 P.M. If the writer of the obituary notice in the *Herald* was correctly informed as to the age of Mrs. Poe, and if the date of her marriage (September 2, 1835) is correctly given, Miss Virginia Eliza Clemm was only in her fourteenth year when she united her fate with that of her cousin, Edgar Allan Poe. Poor child !

Poe's poverty and sickness in the tragic winter of 1846–7 left him and his dying wife largely dependent on the exertions of Mrs. Clemm, and it was chiefly from what she was at this period, I think, that Mr. Willis drew his recollections of her, the beginning of which he dated back three years before. "Our first knowledge of Mr. Poe's removal to the city," he wrote, "was by a call which we received from a lady who introduced herself as the mother of his wife. She was in search of employment for

him, and she excused her errand by mentioning that he was ill, and that her daughter was a confirmed invalid, and that their circumstances were such as compelled her taking it upon herself. The countenance of this lady, made beautiful and saintly with an evidently giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness, her gentle and mournful voice urging its plea, her long-forgotten but habitually and unconsciously refined manners, and her appealing and yet appreciative mention of the claims and abilities of her son, disclosed at once the presence of one of those angels upon earth that women in adversity can be. It was a hard fate that she was watching over. Mr. Poe wrote with fastidious difficulty, and in a style too much above the popular level to be well paid. He was always in pecuniary difficulty, and, with his sick wife, frequently in want of the merest necessaries of life. Winter after winter, for years, the most touching sight to us in this whole city has been that tireless minister to genius, thinly and insufficiently clad, going from office to office with a poem or an article on some literary subject to sell,—sometimes simply pleading in a broken voice that 'he was ill,' whatever might be the reason for his writing nothing,—and never, amid all her tears and recitals of distress, suffering one syllable to escape her lips that could convey a doubt of him, or a complaint, or a lessening of pride in his genius and good intentions. Her daughter died a year and a half since, but she did not desert him. She continued his ministering angel,

living with him, caring for him, guarding him against exposure, and when he was carried away by temptation, amid grief and the loneliness of feelings unreplied to, and awoke from his self-abandonment prostrated in destitution and suffering, *begging* for him still. If woman's devotion, born with a first love and fed with human passion, hallows its object, as it is allowed to do, what does not a devotion like this—pure, disinterested, and holy as the watch of an invisible spirit—say for him who inspired it?" Poe's feeling toward this angel in the house inspired his quatorzain "To My Mother," which appears to have been written during this year of sorrow.

Poe's first traceable poem after the death of his wife was a piece of indifferent blank verse addressed to "M. L. S." (Of all who hail thy presence as the morning"), which he sent to Mrs. Shew as a Valentine. She continued her personal exertions in his behalf, and was instrumental in raising a second and larger sum of money for his necessities. How he contrived to live, we have to conjecture, for he is not known to have done any literary work from which he could have derived money as he needed it. His chief task, indeed, during 1847 was the composition of "Eureka," in the success of which he had a profound belief. His health was so shattered by what he had undergone that Mrs. Shew did not expect him to live long, and she told him, woman-like, that nothing would or could save him from sudden death but a prudent life of calm, with a woman fond enough and strong enough to manage his affairs for him.

From the reminiscences of those who visited Poe at this time, we learn that he was an early riser, and was enamored of the High Bridge, upon whose grassy road he was accustomed to walk at all hours of the day and night. A favorite haunt was a ledge of rocky ground near his cottage, crowned with pines and cedars, under which he used to sit, feasting his eyes upon the quiet beauty of the scene around him. He was wrapt up in "Eureka," upon which he dwelt incessantly to Mrs. Clemm, who followed him as well as she could, though she could hardly have understood him, I think, and who passed hours with him under the glittering starlight, as he walked up and down the piazza of their little cottage, explaining the Cosmos to her while she shivered with cold, though she would not for the world have confessed it.

In the autumn of this year Poe visited Mrs. Shew at her residence in New York, and said that he had a poem to write, but that he had no feeling, no sentiment, no inspiration. She persuaded him to have tea, which was served in the conservatory, the windows of which were open and admitted the sound of neighboring church bells. After tea she produced pens and paper, but he declined them, saying that he disliked the sound of bells so much that night that he could not write; he had no subject, and was exhausted. She took the pen and wrote the head-line, "The Bells, by E. A. Poe," and for the first line of the projected poem, "The bells, the little silver bells." He finished the stanza. She suggested for the

first line of the second stanza, "The heavy iron bells," and he finished that stanza also. Then he copied the composite poem, and heading it, "By Mrs. M. L. Shew," handed it to her, saying it was hers. "My brother came in," continues Mrs. Shew, whose reminiscences I have followed at second hand, "and I sent him to Mrs. Clemm to tell her that 'her boy was in town and was well.' My brother took Poe to his own room, where he slept twelve hours, and could hardly recall the evening's work. This showed his mind was injured—nearly gone out for want of food and from disappointment. He had not been drinking, and had only been a few hours from home. Evidently his vitality was low, and he was nearly insane. While he slept I studied his pulse, and found the same symptoms which I had so often noticed before. I called in Dr. Francis (the old man was odd, but very skillful), who was one of our neighbors. His words were: 'He has heart disease, and will die early in life.' We did not waken him, but let him sleep." After he had breakfasted the next morning, Mrs. Shew went down-town with him, and drove him to Fordham in her carriage. He did not seem to realize that he had been ill, and wondered why "Madame Louise" had been so good as to bring him home.

The composition of "Eureka" occupied Poe a considerable portion of 1847, but he somehow managed to write the little blank-verse Valentine to Mrs. Shew of which I have spoken; to play at writing the stanzas on

"The Bells," in which she assisted him; and to write "Ulalume." This last poem was, all things considered, the most singular poem that he ever produced, if not, indeed, the most singular poem that anybody ever produced, in commemoration of a dead woman, which I take to have been Poe's object, or one of his objects, when he sat down to write it. The mood of mind in which it was conceived was no doubt an imaginative one, but it was not, I think, on the hither side of the boundary between sense and madness. I can perceive no touch of grief in it, no intellectual sincerity, but a diseased determination to create the strange, the remote, and the terrible, and to exhaust ingenuity in order to do so. No healthy mind was ever impressed by "Ulalume," and no musical sense was ever gratified with its measure, which is little beyond a jingle, and with its repetitions, which add to its length without increasing its general effect, and which show more conclusively than any thing in the language, the absurdity of the refrain when it is allowed to run riot, as it does here. The gain of a single word and the variations of a single thought are hardly worth such repetitions as these:

> "The leaves they were crisped and sere—
> The leaves they were withering and sere."

> "Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
> Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul."

> "And star-dials pointed to morn—
> As the star-dials hinted of morn."

"Ulalume" was published anonymously in the *American Review* for December, 1847, having been previously refused by Mrs. Caroline M. Kirkland for the *Union Magazine*. It was attributed at first to Mr. Willis, to whose known verse it bore no earthly resemblance, and it concluded with the following stanza, which Poe afterward omitted at the suggestion of Mrs. Whitman:

> "Said *we*, then—the two, then—'Ah, can it
> Have been that the woodlandish ghouls—
> The pitiful, the merciful ghouls—
> To bar up our way and to ban it
> From the secret that lies in the wolds—
> From the thing that lies hidden in these wolds—
> Have drawn up the spectre of a planet
> From the limbo of lunary souls—
> This sinfully scintillant planet
> From the Hell of the planetary souls?'"

Poe's next production appears to have been a second piece of blank verse, which was addressed to his good friend, Mrs. Shew ("Not long ago the writer of these lines"), and which confirmed the impression, if it needed confirmation, that with all his practice he had not succeeded in mastering the instrument upon which he attempted to play. To the last day of his life he was a mere tyro in blank verse. About this time (January 22, 1848) he wrote to Mr. Willis that he was soon to make an effort to re-establish himself in the literary world, and that he felt he might depend upon his aid. He still clung to the idea of a periodical, which he had entertained five years before with Mr. Clarke. "My general aim," he

wrote, "is to start a magazine, to be called 'The Stylus'; but it would be useless to me, even when established, if not entirely out of the control of a publisher. I mean, therefore, to get up a journal which shall be my *own* at all points. With this end in view, I must get a list of at least five hundred subscribers to begin with—nearly two hundred I have already. I propose, however, to go South and West among my personal and literary friends—old college and West Point acquaintances—and see what I can do. In order to get the means of taking the first step, I propose to lecture at the Society Library, on Thursday, the 3d of February,—and that there may be no cause of *squabbling*, my subject shall *not be literary* at all. I have chosen a broad text—'The Universe.'"

The night of the lecture was stormy, and the audience which assembled to listen to it was a scanty one. It was described by a writer who was present as a rhapsody of the most intense brilliancy: it was certainly a rhapsody of unconscionable length, for it occupied between two and three hours in its delivery. It was not profitable to Poe, however, who was obliged to cast about for other means of establishing his magazine. The most natural thing under the circumstances was to print the substance of what he had read, and he accordingly sought a publisher in the person of Mr. George P. Putnam, of New York, whom he found in his office, and whose attention he claimed in a somewhat nervous and excited manner, upon a subject which he declared was of the highest im-

portance. "Seated at my desk," Mr. Putnam wrote, in the paper from which I have already quoted, "seated at my desk, and looking at me a full minute with his 'glittering eye,' he at length said, 'I am Mr. Poe.' I was 'all ear,' of course, and sincerely interested. It was the author of 'The Raven,' and of 'The Gold Bug.' 'I hardly know,' said the poet, after a pause, 'how to begin what I have to say. It is a matter of profound importance.' After another pause, the poet seeming to be in a tremor of excitement, he at length went on to say that the new publication he had to propose was of momentous interest. Newton's discovery of gravitation was a mere incident compared to the discoveries revealed in this book. It would at once command such universal and intense attention that the publisher might give up all other enterprises, and make this one book the business of his lifetime. An edition of fifty thousand copies might be sufficient to begin with, but it would be but a small beginning. No other scientific event in the history of the world approached in importance the original developments of this book. All this or more, not in irony or jest, but in *intense* earnest, for he held me with his eye like the Ancient Mariner. I was really impressed but not overcome. Promising a decision on Monday (it was late Saturday P.M.), the poet had to rest so long in uncertainty about the *extent* of the book—partly remedied by a small loan, meanwhile. We did venture, not upon fifty thousand, but five hundred." Mr. Putnam subjoined to

this amusing account of his experience with Poe, a note to the effect that the latter proposed to punish him when the book was in type, by giving a duplicate of the MS. to another publisher, because a third little advance was deemed inexpedient.

"Eureka," which was published in the summer of 1848, could not have been a mercantile success, for the five hundred copies of which the edition consisted more than satisfied the public demand. Criticism upon it was evolved from the inner consciousness of its critics, rather than from a careful analysis of the arguments and a ready understanding of the opinions of the author, and was consequently not satisfactory to him. I have never yet known a critic who was not tetchy when criticised, and Poe was no exception to the rule. His confidence in himself was not shaken, however, nor his belief in the ultimate triumph of his prose-poem, which he carefully corrected for a second edition. The copy which he used is before me, with all his corrections in pencil. They are curious as showing the pains which he bestowed upon his style, but not otherwise important or worthy of quotation. If the book had been reprinted from this copy, it would have ended with the following addition: "Note—The pain of the consideration that we shall lose our own individual identity, ceases at once when we further reflect that the process, as above described, is neither more nor less than that of the absorption, by each individual intelligence, of all other intelligences (that is, of the Universe)

into its own. That God may be all in all, *each* must become God."

Poe performed but little literary work in the summer of 1848, though he is said to have kept himself before the public (at least the provincial public) by his lecture on Poetry, which he delivered in July at Lowell, Mass. About this time—or possibly earlier—he appeared to be seriously interested in finding a successor to his lost Virginia Eliza, and to think that he had discovered her in one of the most brilliant women in New England—a poetess of repute, to whom in his lecture he had assigned a preëminence in refinement of art, enthusiasm, imagination, and genius, properly so called. The lady, Mrs. Sarah Helen Whitman, was six years older than Poe, and was a descendant of the Italian-French-Irish family to which she claimed that he belonged—the Le Poers, or Powers. Married at the age of twenty-five to a lawyer of Boston, she was left a widow at the age of thirty, and was a widow of fifteen years' standing at the beginning of her love episode with the poetic widower. This incident in the lives of both made a stir in the literary world at the time it occurred, and has more or less been misunderstood and misrepresented ever since. I propose to relate it here, or rather to let Mrs. Whitman relate it herself, for what follows is from the pen of that lady, who was interested in a paper of mine of which Poe was the subject, published in *Harper's Magazine* for September, 1872, and who wrote me several letters in reference to it, from

one of which, dated at Providence, September 30, 1872, I copy her recollections of what she endured twenty-four years before:

"Early in the summer of 1848, Mr. Poe wrote to Miss Anna Blackwell, then residing in Providence, that, although he had seen me but once, he had a great desire to become acquainted with me, or rather to learn something of my history, etc. Miss Blackwell gave me the letter soon after I had received the anonymous MS., 'Lines to Helen,' afterward published in *Graham's Magazine*, and republished by Griswold in his Memoir. For more than two months I made no acknowledgment of the lines, nor did Miss Blackwell ever make any reply to the letter. Toward the end of the summer, feeling that such entire neglect of the beautiful poem must seem ungracious to the author, I sent him in playful acknowledgment two stanzas of a poem, afterward published in the *Home Journal*, called 'A Night in August.' The stanzas, which ended in a quotation from his poem, were without signature. He received them in Richmond, where he had gone, as he afterward told me, to obtain subscriptions for "The Stylus," intending, if successful there, to make a tour of the Southern States before returning to the North.

"During this visit to Richmond, late in July, 1848, Mr. Poe had called on Mrs. Shelton, formerly Miss Royster, a lady whom he had admired in his youth, and with whom his intimacy had been broken off by the interference of his adopted father, Mr. Allen. Having been received by her with great kindness he was urged by one of their mutual friends to renew his addresses to her. He was tempted to follow this advice, as he

afterward told me, when he received the anonymous stanzas, which brought him at once back to New York. On his arrival there, he obtained from Miss Maria J. McIntosh a letter of introduction which he presented to me in person at Providence on the 21st of September, 1848. During this visit he endeavored, as you will learn from his letters, to persuade me that my influence and my presence would have power to lift his life out of the torpor of despair which had weighed upon him, and give an inspiration to his genius, of which he had as yet given no token. Notwithstanding the eloquence with which he urged upon me his wishes and his hopes, I knew too well that I could not exercise over him the power which he ascribed to me. I was, moreover, wholly dependent on my mother, and her life was bound up in mine. In parting from him I promised him that I would reply to him and tell him what I could not then say to him. It was in reply to this letter of mine that I received from him the first of the enclosed letters.

"I had not answered the second letter when Mr. Poe came again to Providence. He did not keep the promise made to me at the close of it, but again urged me to think of all that he had said on the subject, and to send him my answer in a letter addressed to him in Lowell, to which place he had been invited by some friends to come and deliver a lecture, for which they were making arrangements. I delayed writing him from day to day, unwilling to give him pain by my refusal, and yet fearing to mislead him and compromise myself by any word of friendly sympathy and encouragement. The excitement attending the presidential election, then pending, had in-

terfered with the proposed arrangement for a lecture, and in returning through Boston to Providence he had fallen under the old temptation, which he vainly endeavored to persuade me was caused only by the restless anxiety my silence had occasioned him.

"On the afternoon of the 8th of November, after a prolonged conversation with him on the subject, the result of which seemed to have deeply pained and wounded him, he left me abruptly, and in the course of the evening sent me a wild, incoherent note of renunciation and farewell. Early on the following morning he returned to my mother's house in a state of wild excitement, telling me that his fate for good or for evil rested solely with me, and calling upon me wildly to save him from the doom that was now awaiting him. It was to me a day of unutterable anxiety and suffering. A physician was sent for, who finding symptoms of cerebral congestion, recommended his removal to the house of his friend, Mr. Wm. J. Pabodie, where he received the kindest care and attention until he was sufficiently recovered to leave the city. This is the simple story of an incident which Griswold has perverted into a scene of insult and outrage, perpetrated on the eve of his approaching marriage, with the assumed intention of breaking off the alliance!

"No engagement existed between us at the time. It was not until *after* the scene just related, and, strange as it may seem, *in consequence of it*, that, with many misgivings, I consented to a conditional engagement, which was annulled only after I discovered that he had literally lost the power to free himself from the terrible maelstrom that was drawing him down to

swift destruction. After the scene which I have described, he came but twice to Providence. It is true on that last visit, when he came to deliver a lecture before the Franklyn Lyceum, he prevailed upon me, not without the reluctant concurrence of my friends and family, to consent to an immediate marriage. On the morning of Saturday, December 24th, he wrote a note to Dr. Crocker, requesting him to perform the ceremony, which was appointed for the ensuing Monday evening, and a letter to his mother, informing her that he should arrive with me in New York on the morning of Tuesday, December 27th.

"My friends, who were naturally anxious to prevent this rash marriage, made strenuous remonstrances against its suddenness, and on Saturday afternoon I received a note informing me that Mr. Poe had that very morning broken the solemn promises he had so recently made, by drinking wine in the bar-room of the Earl House. He had taken but a single glass, and no indication of excitement was visible in his manner or appearance ; but this proof of his infirmity of purpose at such a moment proved to me that no influence of mine could avail to save him. He returned to New York that evening in the Stonington express train, accompanied to the cars by Mr. Pabodie, who, with my mother, was present at our last interview.

"Of course the incident caused a great deal of gossip, and the wildest and most exaggerated stories were soon in circulation concerning the breaking of the engagement and his reputed expulsion from the house. Three weeks after his return to New York he wrote me a letter filled with expressions of

Fordham – Dec. 4–48

My dear Mr. Pabodie – On the principle of better late than never" I seize the first opportunity afforded me, in the midst of cares and vexations of all kinds, to write you a few words of cordial thanks for your considerate and gentlemanly attentions to me while in Providence. I do hope that you will always think of me as one of the most obliged and most devoted of your friends. – Please say to Mrs. W., when you next see her, that I thank her for the "papers" and for her promptitude. Say also, that perhaps Mrs Wright is right, but that I believe her wrong, and desire to be kindly remembered. The commands, about Post, have been attended to – Present my respects to Mrs. Allen and to your father

Truly yours always

Edgar Allan Poe.

W. J. Pabodie Esq.

wounded feeling and bitter indignation against my family (to whom he probably attributed these exaggerated stories), and entreating me by the love that had subsisted between us to write to him at once, and assure him that *I*, at least, had not authorized their circulation. Fearing that my answer to this letter might involve a repetition of the harrowing scenes I had passed through, I did not reply to it. I was utterly hopeless of my power to sustain or console him. I longed to assure him of my unalterable sympathy, and my continued interest in his welfare and happiness, but I dared not incur the consequences of further direct communication with him.

"A singular concurrence of circumstances afforded me an opportunity of suggesting to him what I dared not openly express. The publisher of the *Union Magazine* had in December engaged me to furnish an article or a poem for the February number of the *American Metropolitan*, a periodical which was to take the place of the *Union*. I had suffered too much in my health from the exciting scenes just related to prepare any thing expressly for the purpose, and when the publisher wrote to remind me of my promise, I found in a hurried search among my MSS. and papers a copy of unpublished stanzas, written several years before as an accompaniment to an Italian air for the guitar. Here was an intimation of what Macbeth calls 'fate and metaphysical aid.' I felt that Poe would interpret the last verse as a response to the entreaty made to me in his letter—the letter which I had not dared to answer. The verses, which I will transcribe for you, were published in the February number of the magazine, which, I think, did not appear before the middle of March.

"I cannot doubt that they were read by Poe in the same sense which I had intended. Nor can I doubt that in writing 'Annabel Lee'—the strange, sweet song, so charming in spite of its vagueness and its obscurity—he intended that *I* should read in it the veiled expression of his undying remembrance. The assertion made in the Memoir prefixed to Redfield's Illustrated Edition of the Poems, that 'Annabel Lee' was addressed to a Rhode Island lady, etc., was doubtless a purely conjectural one. I do not think that Poe would have been likely to authorize any statement of the kind. He would have preferred rather to leave the subject involved in that mysterious atmosphere, 'out of space, out of time,' that characterized all his more imaginative stories and poems. Other readers may have found in this poem other meanings and other allusions. Mrs. Osgood, you know, affirms that it was inspired by the memory of his wife; but one of her intimate friends wrote me that Mrs. Osgood confessed to have written this 'to put down' a literary lady who claimed, on the authority of Mrs. Clemm, that the poem was written to herself."

Such was Mrs. Whitman's remembrance of this painful episode in her widowed life, which I am the first, I believe, to make public, and in accordance, I believe, with her desire, when the time for publicity should arrive, both for her own sake and that of Poe. "I have long wished," she continued, in the long and interesting letter from which I have quoted, "I have long wished to relate the true story of this episode to some responsible and unprejudiced person, in the hope that at a future day, and after

my death, which cannot now be far distant, something may be said to remove this dark stigma upon his name. Your recent article in *Harper's Monthly*, so sensible, genial, and tolerant, induced me to intrust to you this brief outline of facts."

The MS. "Lines to Helen," to which Mrs. Whitman referred ("I saw thee once—once only—years ago"), were composed, we are told, from a shadowy glimpse which Poe obtained of her one night in Providence three years before, as he was returning to New York from Boston after his unfortunate poetic fiasco in the latter city. That they were written after the second little poem addressed to Mrs. Shew (which is known to have been written early in 1848), is evident, I think, from the structure and movement of the verse, from the repetition in both of the overpowering presence of womanhood, and from a certain indefinable something which the critics have agreed to call internal evidence. The resemblance between the two is positive in the following passages:

> "And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
> Upon the left, and all the way along,
> Amid unpurpled vapors, far away
> To where the prospect terminates—*thee only.*"

> "All—all expired save thee—some less than thou."

The "Lines to Helen" are imaginative and poetical, informed with the spirit of the summer night which they commemorate, and flushed with the impassioned feeling which was their inspiration. They are the best examples

of Poe's talent in blank verse, the dignity of which they violate, however, I think, by the introduction of the refrain principle in the lines beginning "Fell on the upturned faces of these roses," and in the couplet:

> "And purified in their electric fire,
> And sanctified in their elysian fire,"

which recall the worst refrains of "Ulalume."

"A Night in August," two stanzas of which were sent by Mrs. Whitman in playful acknowledgment of Poe's poem, was written in August, 1848. It was published by her five years afterward ("Hours of Life, and Other Poems," Providence, 1853), and republished in the collected edition of her works ("Poems," Boston, 1879), but it contains, in neither edition, a quotation from Poe's pen. One would like to know the two stanzas which she inclosed to him, but internal evidence does not enable us —at least does not enable me—to particularize them. The poem which she published in the *American Metropolitan* for February, 1849, and which she felt that Poe would understand as a response to his last letter—the letter she dared not answer—will be found in the collections I have just named, in both of which it is entitled "Our Island of Dreams." It consists of eight stanzas in the former, and four stanzas in the latter, which corresponds with the version she sent me, which I copy from her letter:

STANZAS FOR MUSIC.

"By the foam
Of perilous seas in faery lands forlorn."—KEATS.

Tell him I lingered alone on the shore
Where we parted in sorrow to meet nevermore;
The night wind blew cold on my desolate heart,
But colder these wild words of doom—"Ye must part."

O'er the dark heaving waters I sent forth a cry:
Save the wail of those waters there came no reply.
I longed, like a bird, o'er the billows to flee,
From my lone Island home, and the moan of the sea.

Away, far away from the dream-haunted shore,
Where the waves ever murmur, "no more, nevermore,"
Where I wake in the wild hour of midnight to hear
That lone song of the surges so mournful and drear.

When the clouds that now veil from us heaven's fair light,
Their soft, silver lining turn forth on the night,—
When time shall the vapors of falsehood dispel,
He shall know if I loved him, but never how well.

Admirers of Poe, who may wish to trace the influence of his personality in the writings of Mrs. Whitman, are referred to the Boston edition of her Poems, where they will find sixteen different effusions dedicated to his memory, *i. e.*, "Remembered Music," "Our Island of Dreams," "The Last Flowers," "Song," "Withered Flowers," "The Phantom Voice," "Pictures in October," "Resurgemus," six (so-called) "Sonnets to——," and "Pictures in April" (pp. 75–98), and "The Portrait" (pp. 195–197). She died on June 27, 1878, in the seventy-sixth year of her age.

I received from Mrs. Whitman, besides the letters which

she wrote me in regard to Poe, the letters which she received from Poe himself, and which she naturally valued, so much so that she declined to trust them to the mail, but sent them by a private hand. If my recollection is correct, she did not send me *all* his correspondence, but two of his longest and most characteristic epistles. I presumed, at any rate, that they were characteristic; I saw that they were long, the shortest of the two extending to ten or twelve pages of large-sized letter-paper. I read them carefully, and I own frankly that I did not like them. Reading them with all the allowance that should be made for such productions, they struck me as being forced, unnatural, and false—exercises in impassioned writing upon which a good deal of intellectual ingenuity had been expended, but which were destitute of manliness and truth. I could not believe in the sincerity of the writer, and I wondered that Mrs. Whitman could, for she did most religiously. I owe it to myself to say that I do not admire amatory letters, and to the memory of Poe to say that his amatory letters are not more stilted and artificial than those of Sylvander to Clarinda. The object of these effusions, I imagine, is to impress the confiding persons to whom they are addressed with a sense of their own perfections, and of the exalted devotion which they have inspired; and in order to accomplish this object, their writers are not apt to be scrupulous as to the means employed; for in love, as in war, all is fair. It is a casuistry, of course, but there is no argument against it, it is so

inherent to human nature ; besides, it is pleasant while it lasts, so pleasant, indeed, as to reconcile us to the ethics of the sarcastic poet, by whom we are assured :

> " The pleasure is as great
> In being cheated as to cheat."

If the writers of love-letters were not permitted to romance a little, the world would be more unbearable than it is now—there would be fewer marriages, and the population of the civilized globe would consequently be diminished. Let us write them then, since we must, but let us keep them to ourselves, or, better still, let us destroy them when we have committed them to memory. Precious in privacy, they are profaned by publicity, and laughable, if not worse, as Literature.

Such, at least, is my opinion, though it is not the opinion of the writer of the paper in *Appletons' Journal*, which I have already mentioned, and from which I have derived what I have written about Mrs. Shew and her friendship for Poe. It contains extracts from his letters to her, as well as from his letters to two other ladies whose names are not given. They were sisters, and they lived, I believe, at Lowell, Mass., where he made their acquaintance in the summer of 1848, when he visited that city to deliver his lecture on poetry. He was attracted by them, and was enamored of one whose name was Annie, to whom he poured out his soul on paper as fervently as he did to Mrs. Whitman. I have read his correspondence

with this lady, and I find the same objection to it that I found with his correspondence with Mrs. Whitman: that it is strained, exaggerated, and unnatural. It is not without value, however, as an assistance toward understanding him, and, waiving the amatory portions of it, I shall select from the small residuum whatever will enable me to fill out the scanty outline of his personal biography.

The first extract which I shall make (I am sorry to say it is a garbled one), refers to a painful adventure which had befallen him, the cause of which we are left to conjecture, as well as the time when it occurred, which I imagine to have been not long before the date of the letter, which was written at Fordham, November 16, 1848. "I said to myself—'it is for the last time, until we meet in Heaven.' I remember nothing distinctly from that moment until I found myself in Providence. I went to bed and wept through a long, long, hideous night of despair. When the day broke, I arose and endeavored to quiet my mind by a rapid walk in the cold, keen air—but all *would* not do—the demon tormented me still. Finally, I procured two ounces of laudanum, and, without returning to my hotel, took the cars back to Boston. When I arrived I wrote you a letter, in which I opened my whole heart to you—to *you*. * * * I told you how my struggles were more than I could bear. * * * I then reminded you of that holy promise which was the last I exacted from you in parting—the promise that, under all circumstances, you would come to me on my bed of death.

I implored you to come *then*, mentioning the place where I should be found in Boston. Having written this letter, I swallowed about half the laudanum, and hurried to the post-office—intending not to take the rest until I saw you —for—I did not doubt for one moment that Annie would keep her sacred promise. But I had not calculated on the strength of the laudanum, for before I reached the post-office my reason was entirely gone, and the leter was never put in. Let me pass over—my darling *sister*—the awful horrors which succeeded. A friend was at hand, who aided and (if it can be called saving) saved me, but it is only within the last three days that I have been able to remember what occurred in that dreary interval. It appears that after the laudanum was rejected from the stomach I became calm and—to a casual observer—sane, so that I was suffered to go back to Providence."

Mrs. Clemm was interested in the fair correspondent of her son-in law, to whom, on January 11, 1849, she communicated the pleasing intelligence that he was writing most industriously, and that she had every hope that he would, in a short time, surmount most of their difficulties. And he, in turn, on the same date, communicated the pleasing intelligence to his correspondent that he was *so* happy to think that she *really* loved him, and added; "If you had lived as long as I, you would understand *fully* what I mean. Indeed, indeed, Annie, there is *nothing* in this world worth living for except love—love, *not* such as I once thought I felt for Mrs. ——, but such as

burns in my very soul for *you*—so pure—so unworldly—a love which would make *all* sacrifices for your sake." I promised myself to pass over the amatory portions of this curious correspondence, but I could not resist the passage I have just quoted, which shows the facility with which Poe was off with the old love and on with the new. I say old love, for I presume the blank can only refer to Mrs. Whitman, who, by the way, was a new love two months earlier, the old love at that time being the present new love, Annie! Poe's next letter to this favored lady was written in the same exalted strain, but it occasionally descended to the earth, as when it touched upon his literary employments. "I am *so* busy now, and feel so full of energy. Engagements to write are pouring in upon me every day. I had two proposals within the last week *from Boston*. I sent yesterday an article to the *American Review* about 'Critics and Criticism.' Not long ago I sent one to the *Metropolitan* called 'Landor's Cottage:' it has something about Annie in it, and will appear, I suppose, in the March number. To the *S. L. Messenger* I have sent fifty pages of 'Marginalia'—five pages to appear each month of the current year. I have also made permanent engagements with every magazine in America (except *Peterson's National*), including a Cincinnati magazine called *The Gentleman's*. So you see that I have only to keep up my spirits to get out of all my pecuniary troubles." He was wiser than he had been in one respect, for he tells Annie that she may rest assured of one thing,

that from that day forth he would shun the pestilential society of *literary women*. "They are a heartless, unnatural, venomous, dishonorable *set*, with no guiding principle but inordinate self-esteem." In his next letter, which was written about three weeks later, he referred again to his literary employments. "I have been *so* busy, dear Annie, ever since I returned from Providence—six weeks ago. I have not suffered a day to pass without writing from a page to three pages. Yesterday, I wrote five, and the day before a poem considerably longer than 'The Raven.' I call it 'The Bells.' How I wish my Annie could see it! Her opinion is so dear to me on such topics. On *all* it is every thing to me—but on poetry in especial. And Sarah, too. I told her when we were at W——, that I hardly ever knew any one with a keener discrimination in regard to what is *really* poetical. The five prose pages I finished yesterday are called—what do you think?—I am sure you will never guess—'Hop-Frog!' Only think of *your* Eddy writing a story with *such* a name as 'Hop-Frog!' You would never guess the subject (which is a terrible one) from the title, I am sure. It will be published in a weekly paper of Boston."

The reference to "The Bells," as a poem which he had just written, is singular, in view of the poem with that title which he wrote in conjunction with Mrs. Shew, the existence of which, and of the circumstances attending its composition, he seems to have entirely forgotten. "Sarah" was the sister of "Annie," upon whom he some-

times bestowed vicariously the affection that was intended for Annie alone. A later letter, which bears the date of March 23, 1849, is not without literary value in that it fixes, or nearly fixes, the date of one of Poe's most admired poems, of which his correspondent was the heroine, poetically speaking. "I think the lines 'For Annie' (those I now send) much the *best* I have ever written—but an author can seldom depend on his own estimate of his own works—so I wish to know what my Annie *truly* thinks of them—also your dear sister and Mr. C——. Do not let these verses go *out of your possession* until you see them in print—as I have sold them to the publisher of the ——." Another letter, without date, but apparently later, concludes this unique correspondence (with the exception of an unimportant note), as far as it has yet seen the light. It was written under a depression of spirits, which was justified by his circumstances. "You know how cheerfully I wrote to you not long ago—about my prospects—hopes—how I anticipated being soon out of difficulty—well! all seems to be frustrated—at least for the present. As usual, misfortunes never come single, and I have met one disappointment after another. The *Columbian Magazine*, in the first place, failed—then Post's *Union* (taking with it my principal dependence); then the *Whig Review* was forced to stop paying for contributions—then the *Democratic*; then (on account of his oppression and insolence) I was obliged to quarrel, finally, with ——; and then, to crown all, the —— —— (from

which I anticipated so much, and with which I had made a regular engagement for $10 a week throughout the year) has written a circular to correspondents, pleading poverty and declining to receive any more articles. More than this, the *S. L. Messenger*, which owes me a good deal, cannot pay *just* yet—and altogether I am reduced to *Sartain* and *Graham*—both very precarious." In the final paragraph he mentions two of his poems, the date of which has not hitherto been known: the sonnet, "To My Mother," and "Annabel Lee," which he calls a ballad.

The history of "The Bells" is worthy of preservation in the history of American literature. As originally written, it consisted of only eighteen lines, which were sent to the editors of *Sartain's Magazine*, by whom they were accepted and paid for. They were followed, after a lapse of some time, by a second and longer version, which also was accepted and paid for, and which, in turn, after another lapse of time, was followed by a third and still longer version, which also was accepted and paid for. The poem finally appeared (in the last version, of course) in *Sartain's Magazine*, though not, it would seem, until after it had been rejected by the editor of the *American Review*. As it stands in the collected edition of Poe's works it is ninety-five lines longer than it was in the first version, which strikingly recalls Mrs. Shew's recollection of the composite poem in which she had a share. Here it is:

THE BELLS.

The bells !—hear the bells !
The merry wedding bells !
The little silver bells !
How fairy-like a melody there swells
From the silver tinkling cells
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells !

The bells !—ah, the bells !
The heavy iron bells !
Hear the tolling of the bells !
Hear the knells !
How horrible a monody there floats
From their throats—
From their deep-toned throats !
How I shudder at the notes
From the melancholy throats
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells—

If I were called upon to express my opinion of Poe as a poetic artist, I should say that "The Bells" was the most perfect example of his "power of words," if not, indeed, the most perfect example of that kind of power in all poetic literature. I should also say that "Alexander's Feast," which our ancestors thought so incomparable, was not to be named in the same day with it. I should say further (for I love to be frank), that if "Annabel Lee" and "For Annie" possess any merit other than attaches to melodious jingle, I have not been able to discover it. I am not able to state exactly when and where these, the last poems of Poe, were published; but as I wish to add whatever I can to the bibliography of his poems in general,

I will state here that one poem, which I have not yet named, "An Enigma" ("'Seldom we find,' says Solomon Don Dunce"), was published before the presumed date of Poe's last letter to Annie, probably in December, 1848. It is in the form of a sonnet (that is to say, it consists of fourteen lines, as does also the poem addressed to his mother, which is no sonnet), the enigma which is enclosed therein being the name of the gifted lady in whose honor it was written, which is discoverable by adding the first letter of the first line to the second letter of the second line, and so on, jumping a letter in each line, until the fourteenth and last is reached, and the name is revealed in Sarah Anna Lewis. I mention this poem particularly, because it is an instance of Poe's singular tendency to mistakes—a tendency which led him to give Dr. Griswold two different years as the dates of his birth, the last happening to be two years after the death of his mother! The mistake in "An Enigma" was unfortunate, as an English writer has pointed out, for the name of the lady is "Estelle," which might well belong to a poetess, and *not* "Sarah Anna," which is not in the least poetical. Poe wrote another enigmatic poem, also in honor of a lady whom he greatly admired. It is entitled "A Valentine," and was no doubt read as one at the literary parties in Waverley Place, which he at one time frequented, and the "sweet name" which lies nestling in its lines, letter by letter, in a descending scale, as in "An Enigma," is that of Frances Sargent Osgood.

We have now reached June 29, 1849, the day when Poe left Fordham for Richmond. Why he undertook this journey, at this time, is not clear. He seems to have undertaken it with apprehension, for he arranged his papers before he left, and instructed Mrs. Clemm what to do in case he should die before she saw him again. He reached Philadelphia safely, but while there met with some of his acquaintances, who made much of him, and caused him to forget the object of his journey whatever it was. One day he turned up at the house of Mr. John Sartain, the publisher of *Sartain's Magazine*, in an excited condition of mind,—the victim of a hallucination, which assumed the form of a conspiracy against his person, and asked for a razor that he might shave off his moustache, and so escape his enraged pursuers. Mr. Sartain shaved him, and persuading him to go to bed, watched over him through the night. He remained with Mr. Sartain the next day, but when night came left the house, followed by his host, to whom, rather than with whom, he talked incessantly as they walked the streets hour after hour. At last he contrived to disappear, worn out with exercise and excitement, and passed the remainder of the night in a dead sleep in an open field. Ten days elapsed, and Mrs. Clemm had not heard of him; but at the end of a month her anxiety was relieved by learning that he was in Richmond.

There are two descriptions of this last visit of Poe's to Richmond,—one written in 1872 by Mr. John R. Thomp-

son, a former editor of the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and at that time one of the editors of the New York *Evening Post*; the other, some five or six years later, by Mrs. Susan Archer Talley Weiss, of Virginia. The substance of Mr. Thompson's recollections was printed by me in *Harper's Magazine* for September, 1872; Mrs. Weiss' reminiscences were given to the world in *Scribner's Monthly* for March, 1878.

When Poe was first heard of by his friends in Richmond, he had been for several days at a common tavern in a portion of the city known as "Rocket's." Mr. Thompson took a carriage and drove thither with the intention of fetching him away, but he had disappeared. The tavern-keeper, a man named Jacob Mull, knew nothing of his whereabouts, or who he was, except that he said his name was Poe, and that he had slept for a number of nights on the sanded floor of the bar-room. At the end of a week or ten days Poe appeared at the office of Mr. Thompson, whom he knew only by correspondence, and introduced himself. His garments were old and seedy, but were brushed with scrupulous care, and there were no signs of dissipation in his smooth and well-shaven face. He asked permission to have his letters directed to Mr. Thompson's box, and room enough in his office to write in, both of which requests were, of course, cheerfully granted. What Mr. Kennedy is reported to have done for him sixteen years before was done now—he was rejuvenated as regards his clothing by Mr. Thomp-

son's tailor, and made presentable in society. For a time all went well with him, but at last he was missing. At the end of two or three days he returned with a damaged eye. He had been mistaken for some one else by a ruffian in a bar-room, and knocked down without a word. He returned to his work, to disappear again. He was next heard of at a fashionable drinking saloon called "The Alhambra," where he was found explaining "Eureka" to a motley crowd of bibulous loungers, by whom it was no more understood than by his literary and theological critics. Such in 1872 were the recollections of Mr. Thompson, to whom, when he left Richmond, to cancel a small advance, Poe handed a MS. copy of "Annabel Lee," for publication in the *Messenger*, though he had already sent a copy of the same poem to Dr. Griswold before leaving Fordham, with instructions to sell it to Graham or Godey, if he could do so, and place the amount received for it to his credit.

The reminiscences of Mrs. Weiss are among the most interesting, if not, indeed, the most interesting of those of any of Poe's contemporaries. She had reason to feel kindly toward him, for he had written pleasantly about her early poems, in a review of Griswold's "Female Poets of America," in the *Messenger*. This was some time before she met him, and when she bore her maiden name, Susan Archer Talley. Her knowledge of Poe did not correspond with that of Mr. Thompson, and other of his male friends, but she was not ignorant of the tempta-

tion which beset him—the melancholy folly which laid him low and stained his name.

If the information of Mrs. Weiss was correct, Poe first took a room at the American Hotel, but soon changed his quarters to the Old Swan Tavern, which had once, and probably in his youth, been the fashionable hotel of Richmond. It was cheap and well kept, in the old Virginia style, and was the nearest hotel to Duncan's Lodge, the residence of Mrs. Mackenzie, the widow of the gentleman who had adopted Rosalie Poe in her infancy. Mrs. Mackenzie had always been the friend of Poe, who, as well as his sister, was accustomed to call her "Ma," and to confide in her as in a mother, and he was naturally a good deal at her house, to which the young poetess was a frequent visitor. He desired an introduction to her.

"The remembrance of that first meeting with the poet is still as vividly impressed upon my mind as though it had been but yesterday. A shy and dreamy girl, scarcely more than a child, I had all my life taken an interest in those strange stories and poems of Edgar Poe; and now, with my old childish impression of their author scarcely worn off, I regarded the meeting with an eager yet shrinking anticipation. As I entered the parlor, Poe was seated near an open window, quietly conversing. His attitude was easy and graceful, with one arm lightly resting upon the back of his chair. His dark, curling hair was thrown back from his broad forehead—a style in which he habitually wore it. At sight of him the impression produced upon me was of a refined, high-bred, and chivalrous gentle-

man. I use the word 'chivalrous' as exactly descriptive of something in his whole *personnel*, distinct from either polish or high-breeding, and which, though instantly apparent, was yet an effect too subtle to be described. He rose on my entrance, and, other visitors being present, stood with one hand resting on the back of his chair, awaiting my greeting. So dignified was his manner, so reserved his expression, that I experienced an involuntary recoil, until I turned to him and saw his eyes suddenly brighten as I offered my hand; a barrier seemed to melt between us, and I felt that we were no longer strangers.

"I am thus minute in my account of my first meeting with Poe because I would illustrate, if possible, the manner peculiar to him, and also the indescribable charm, I might almost say magnetism, which his eyes possessed above any others that I have ever seen."

It was this influence, Mrs. Weiss thinks, which so often attracted strangers to Poe, and which Mrs. Osgood experienced on her first interview with him in the parlors of the Astor House.

"From this time I saw Poe constantly," she continues, "especially during the last weeks of his stay in Richmond. From his sister also, and from intimate common friends, we knew all concerning him, so that about this portion of his life there is no reserve and no mystery.

"It would be better, indeed, for his fair name could a veil be drawn over certain dark spots which disfigure this otherwise unusually pure and happy phase of his life. I know that

he strove against the evil, but his will was weak ; and having once yielded, in however slight a degree, said his friends, he seemed to lose all control over himself ; and twice during his visit to Richmond his life was thus seriously endangered. Yet though I heard something of these things, I did not then, nor until long after, fully understand them. It was his own request that I should not be informed of his weakness ; and he was scrupulously careful never to appear in our presence except when he was, as he expressed it, ' entirely himself.'

"And as himself—that is, as he appeared to me in my own home and in society,—Poe was preëminently a gentleman. This was apparent in every thing about him, even to the least detail. He dressed always in black, and with faultless taste and simplicity. An indescribable refinement pervaded all that he did and said. His general bearing in society, especially toward strangers, was quiet, dignified, and somewhat reserved, even at times unconsciously approaching *hauteur*. He rarely smiled, and never laughed. When pleased, nothing could exceed the charm of his manner—to his own sex cordial, to ladies, marked by a sort of chivalrous, respectful courtesy.

"I was surprised to find that the poet was not the melancholy person I had unconsciously pictured. On the contrary, he appeared, except on one occasion, invariably cheerful, and frequently playful in mood. He seemed quietly amused by the light-hearted chat of the young people about him, and often joined them in humorous repartee, sometimes tinged with a playful sarcasm. Yet he preferred to sit quietly and listen and observe. Nothing escaped his keen observation. He was extremely fastidious in his idea of feminine

requirements, and himself lamented that at slight things in women he was apt to be repelled and disgusted, even against his better judgment. Though in the social evenings with us, or at Duncan's Lodge, Poe would join in the light conversation or amusement of the hour, I observed that it had not power to interest him for any length of time. He preferred a seat on the portico or a stroll about the lawn or garden in company with a friend.

"In his conversations with me Poe expressed himself with a freedom and unreserve which gave me a clearer insight into his personal history and character than, I think, was possessed by many persons. Indeed, I may say that from the moment of our meeting he was never to me the 'inexplicable' character that he was pronounced by others. Young as I was, I had yet by some intuitive instinct of perception, as it were, comprehended the finer and more elevated nature of the man, and it was probably to his own consciousness of this that I owed his confidence. I remember his saying, near the beginning of our acquaintance and in reply to a remark of my own: 'I cannot express the pleasure—the more than pleasure—of finding myself so entirely understood by you'; adding: 'It is not often that I am so understood.' Again, he said of Mrs. Osgood: 'She is the only one of my friends who *understands* me.' His own insight into personal character was quick and intuitive, but not deep; and it struck me even then, with all my youthful inexperience, that in knowledge of human nature he was, for a man of his genius, strangely deficient.

"Among other things, Poe spoke to me freely of his future plans and prospects. He was at this time absorbed in his

cherished scheme of establishing his projected journal, 'The Stylus.' Nearly all his old friends in Virginia had promised to aid him with the necessary funds, and he was sanguine of success. He intended to spare no pains, no effort, to establish this as the leading literary journal of the country. The plan of it, which he explained in detail, but of which I retain but little recollection, was to be something entirely original; and the highest 'genius, distinctive from talent,' of the country was to be represented in its pages. To secure this result he would offer a more liberal price for contributions than any other publisher. This would, of course, demand capital to begin with, which was all that he required; and of that he had the promise. To establish this journal had been, he said, the cherished dream of his life, and now at last he felt assured of success. And in thus speaking he held his head erect, and his eyes glowed with enthusiasm. 'I must and will succeed!' he said.

"Much curiosity has been expressed, and many and various statements have been made in regard to the poet's relations at this time with Mrs. Sarah Shelton, of Richmond. So far as I am certainly informed upon the subject, the story is simply this:

"The two had been school-mates, and, as such, a childish flirtation had existed between them. When, some years previous to this time, Poe made a brief visit to Richmond, Mrs. Shelton, then a wealthy widow, had invited him to her house and treated him with special attention. Shortly after the death of his wife, an intimate friend wrote to him that Mrs. Shelton often inquired after him, and suggested the plan

which he somewhat later, when so much in need of money, came seriously to consider. Certain it is that a correspondence existed between the poet and Mrs. Shelton almost from the time of Mrs. Poe's death, and that for months before his appearance in Richmond it was understood by his friends that an engagement of marriage existed between them. His attentions to the lady immediately upon his arrival tended to confirm the report. Some friend of hers, however, represented to her that Poe's motives were of a mercenary nature ; and of this she accused him, at the same time declaring her intention of so securing her property as to prevent his having any command of it. A rupture ensued, and thenceforth no further communication took place between them.

"Poe never publicly admitted his engagement with Mrs. Shelton, and appeared anxious to keep the matter private. Mr. John M. Daniel, the well-known editor of the *Examiner*, having in the columns of that paper made some allusion to the reported engagement, Poe resented it as an unwarrantable liberty, and proceeded to the *Examiner* office to demand an explanation. Mr. Daniel, whose fiery temper was well known to Poe, had been informed of the proposed visit, and on the latter's entrance advanced to meet him. The two, who had never met before, stood facing each other ; but before a dozen words had been spoken, Mr. Daniel, as with a sudden impulse, extended his hand, and Poe, who was quick to respond to any token of good feeling, and doubtless recognized the nobility of the man before him, as readily accepted it, and thus was ratified a friendship which lasted while they lived.

"It will be seen from the above account of the affair

with Mrs. Shelton that Poe did not, as is stated by his biographers, leave Richmond for New York with the intention of preparing for his marriage with that lady. Yet that he had entered into an engagement of marriage with her even previous to his appearance in Richmond, I am assured. It was at a time when, as he himself declared, he stood more in need of money than at any previous period of his life. It was, to his own view, the turning-point of his fortunes, depending upon his cherished scheme of establishing 'The Stylus,' through which he was to secure fame and fortune. This could not be done without money. Money was the one thing needful, upon which all else depended; and money he must have, at whatever cost or sacrifice. Hence the affair with Mrs. Shelton. She was a lady of respectability, but of plain manners and practical disposition; older than Poe, and not gifted with those traits which might be supposed capable of attracting one of his peculiar taste and temperament.

"While upon this subject, I venture, though with great hesitation, to say a word in relation to Poe's own marriage with his cousin, Virginia Clemm. I am aware that there exists with the public but one view of this union, and that so lovely and touching in itself, that to mar the picture with even a shadow inspires almost a feeling of remorse. Yet since in the biography of a distinguished man of genius truth is above all things desirable, and since in this instance the facts do not redound to the discredit of any party concerned, I may be allowed to state what I have been assured is truth.

"Poets are proverbial for uncongenial marriages, and to this Poe can scarcely be classed as an exception. From the time

when as a youth of nineteen he became a tutor to his sweet and gentle little cousin of six years old, he loved her with the tender and protective fondness of an elder brother. As years passed he became the subject of successive fancies or passions for various charming women; but she, gradually budding into early womanhood, experienced but one attachment—an absorbing devotion to her handsome, talented, and fascinating cousin. So intense was this passion that her health and spirits became seriously affected, and her mother, aroused to painful solicitude, spoke to Edgar about it. This was just as he was preparing to leave her house, which had been for some years his home, and enter the world of business. The idea of this separation was insupportable to Virginia. The result was that Poe, at that time a young man of twenty-eight, married his little, penniless, and delicate child-cousin of fourteen or fifteen, and thus unselfishly secured her own and her mother's happiness. In his wife he had ever the most tender and devoted of companions; but it was his own declaration that he ever missed in her a certain intellectual and spiritual sympathy necessary to perfect happiness in such a union. It was this need which so often impelled him to 'those many romantic little episodes' of which Mrs. Osgood speaks, and which were well known to Poe's acquaintance. He was never a deliberately unkind husband, and toward the close of Mrs. Poe's life he was assiduous in his tender care and attention. Yet his own declaration to an intimate friend of his youth was that his marriage 'had not been a congenial one'; and I repeatedly heard the match ascribed to Mrs. Clemm, by those who were well acquainted with the family and the circumstances. In

thus alluding to a subject so delicate, I have not lightly done so, or unadvisedly made a statement which seems refuted by the testimony of so many who have written of 'the passionate idolatry' with which the poet regarded his wife. I have heard the subject often and freely discussed by Poe's most intimate friends, including his sister, and upon this authority I speak. Lovely in person, sweet and gentle in disposition, his young wife deserved, doubtless, all the love that was in his nature to bestow. Of his unvarying filial affection for Mrs. Clemm, and of her almost angelic devotion to himself and his interests, there can be no question."

I drop the thread of Mrs. Weiss' narrative here for a moment, to say that her account of Poe's relations with Mrs. Shelton is at variance with others that have reached us. I think she is mistaken, for example, in stating that he made a visit to Richmond some years previous to the one she is describing; that he renewed his early acquaintance with, and became engaged to, Mrs. Shelton at that time; and that a rupture ensued between them, occasioned by the belief on her part that his motives were of a mercenary nature. I infer from the recollections of Mrs. Shelton herself (if she is correctly reported in the article in *Appletons' Journal* for May, 1878), that she met him during this visit for the first time in many years. She was ready to go to church one Sunday, when a servant entered and told her that a gentleman in the parlor wished to see her. She went down, and was amazed at seeing Poe, whom she knew instantly. He came up to her in the most

enthusiastic manner, and said: "Oh! Elmira, is it you?" She told him that she was going to church, that she never let any thing interfere with that, and that he must call again. He called again, and renewed his addresses. She laughed, as she well might if she was the elder, he being then in his forty-first year. He looked serious, and said he was in earnest, and had been thinking about it for a long time. When she found that he was serious, she became serious also, and told him that if he would not take a positive denial, he must give her time to consider. He answered: "A love that hesitated was not a love for him." He stayed with Mrs. Shelton a long time, however, was very pleasant and cheerful, and came to see her frequently. When he was going away he begged her to marry him, and promised he would be every thing she could desire. He said when he left that he was going to New York, to wind up some business matters, and that he would return to Richmond as soon as he had accomplished it, although he said he had a presentiment that he should never see her any more. "I was not engaged to him," is the declaration of Mrs. Shelton, "but there was a partial understanding." Having stated the *pros* and *cons* of this curious love affair, I return to the reminiscences of Mrs. Weiss.

"I can vividly recall him as he appeared on his visits to us. He always carried a cane, and upon entering the shade of the avenue would remove his hat, throw back his hair,

and walk lingeringly, as if enjoying the coolness, carrying his hat in his hand, generally behind him. Sometimes he would pause to examine some rare flower, or to pluck a grape from the laden trellises. He met us always with an expression of pleasure illuminating his countenance and lighting his fine eyes.

"Poe's eyes, indeed, were his most striking feature, and it was to these that his face owed its peculiar attraction. I have never seen other eyes at all resembling them. They were large, with long, jet-black lashes,—the iris dark steel-gray, possessing a crystalline clearness and transparency, through which the jet-black pupil was seen to expand and contract with every shade of thought and emotion. I observed that the lids never contracted, as is so usual in most persons, especially when talking; but his gaze was ever full, open, and unshrinking. His usual expression was dreamy and sad. He had a way of sometimes turning a slightly askance look upon some person who was not observing him, and, with a quiet, steady gaze, appear to be mentally taking the calibre of the unsuspecting subject. 'What *awful* eyes Mr. Poe has!' said a lady to me. 'It makes my blood run cold to see him slowly turn and fix them upon me when I am talking.'

"Apart from the wonderful beauty of his eyes, I would not have called Poe a very handsome man. He was, in my opinion, rather distinguished-looking than handsome. What he had been when younger I had heard, but at the period of my acquaintance with him he had a pallid and careworn look,—somewhat haggard, indeed,—very apparent except in his moments of animation. He wore a dark mustache, scrupulously

kept, but not entirely concealing a slightly contracted expression of the mouth and an occasional twitching of the upper lip resembling a sneer. This sneer, indeed, was easily excited —a motion of the lip, scarcely perceptible, and yet intensely expressive. There was in it nothing of ill-nature, but much of sarcasm, as when he remarked of a certain pretentious editor, 'He can make bold plunges into shallow water'; and again, in reference to an editor presenting a costly book to a lady whose poems he had for some years published while yet refusing to pay for them, Poe observed, 'He could afford it,' with that almost imperceptible curl of the lip, more expressive of contempt than words could have been. The shape of his head struck me, even on first sight, as peculiar. There was a massive projection of the broad brow and temples, with the organ of causality very conspicuously developed, a marked flatness of the top of the head, and an unusual fulness at the back. I had at this time no knowledge of phrenology; but now, in recalling this peculiar shape, I cannot deny that in Poe what are called the intellectual and animal portions of the head were remarkably developed, while in the moral regions there was as marked a deficiency. Especially there was a slight depression instead of fulness of outline where the organs of veneration and firmness are located by phrenologists. This peculiarity detracted so much from the symmetrical proportions of the head that he sought to remedy the defect by wearing his hair tossed back, thus producing more apparent height of the cranium."

Mrs. Weiss was convinced that this visit of Poe's to Richmond was one of the brightest and happiest seasons

of his life, or would have been, if he had but possessed a will of sufficient strength to preserve him from his terrible temptation.

"As I have said, the knowledge of this weakness was by his own request concealed from me. All that I knew of the matter was when a friend informed me that 'Mr. Poe was too unwell to see us that evening.' A day or two after this he sent a message by his sister requesting some flowers, in return for which came a dainty note of thanks, written in a tremulous hand. He again wrote, inclosing a little anonymous poem which he had found in some newspaper and admired; and on the day following he made his appearance among us, but so pale, tremulous, and apparently subdued, as to convince me that he had been seriously ill. On this occasion he had been at his rooms at the Old Swan, where he was carefully tended by Mrs. Mackenzie's family, but on a second and more serious relapse he was taken by Dr. Mackenzie and Dr. Gibbon Carter to Duncan's Lodge, where during some days his life was in imminent danger. Assiduous attention saved him, but it was the opinion of the physicians that another such attack would prove fatal. This they told him, warning him seriously of the danger. His reply was that if people would not tempt him he would not fall. Dr. Carter relates how, on this occasion, he had a long conversation with him, in which Poe expressed the most earnest desire to break from the thraldom of his besetting sin, and told of his many unavailing struggles to do so. He was moved even to tears, and finally declared, in the most solemn manner, that this time he *would* restrain himself—*would* withstand any temptation.

"The only occasion on which I saw Poe really sad or depressed was on a walk to the Hermitage, the old deserted seat of the Mayo family, where he had, in his youth, been a frequent visitor. On reaching the place, our party separated, and Poe and myself strolled slowly about the grounds. I observed that he was unusually silent and preoccupied, and, attributing it to the influence of memories associated with the place, forbore to interrupt him. He passed slowly by the mossy bench called the 'Lovers' Seat,' beneath two aged trees, and remarked, as we turned toward the garden, 'There used to be white violets here.' Searching amid the tangled wilderness of shrubs, we found a few late blossoms, some of which he placed carefully between the leaves of a note-book. Entering the deserted house, he passed from room to room with a grave, abstracted look, and removed his hat, as if involuntarily, on entering the salon where in old times many a brilliant company had assembled. Seated in one of the deep windows, over which now grew masses of ivy, his memory must have borne him back to former scenes, for he repeated the familiar lines of Moore :

'I feel like one
Who treads alone
Some banquet hall deserted,'

and paused, with the first expression of real sadness that I had ever seen on his face. The light of the setting sun shone through the drooping ivy-boughs into the ghostly room, and the tattered and mildewed paper-hangings, with their faded tracery of rose garlands, waved fitfully in the autumn breeze. An inexpressibly eerie feeling came over me, which I can

even now recall, and, as I stood there, my old childish idea of the poet as a spirit of mingled light and darkness, recurred strongly to my imagination. I have never forgotten that scene, or the impression of the moment.

"Poe one day told me that it was necessary that he should go to New York. He must make certain preparations for establishing his magazine, 'The Stylus,' but he should in less than two weeks return to Richmond, where he proposed henceforth to reside. He looked forward to this arrangement with great pleasure. 'I mean to turn over a new leaf; I shall begin to lead a new life,' he said, confidently. He had often spoken to me of his books—'few, but *recherché*,'—and he now proposed to send certain of these by express, for my perusal. 'You must annotate them extensively,' he said. 'A book wherein the minds of the author and the reader are thus brought in contact is to me a hundred-fold increased in interest. It is like flint and steel.' One of the books which he thus desired me to read was Mrs. Browning's poems, and another, one of Hawthorne's works. I remember his saying of the latter that he was 'indisputably the best prose writer in America,' that 'Irving and the rest were mere commonplace beside him'; that 'there was more inspiration of true genius in Hawthorne's prose than in all Longfellow's poetry.' This may serve to give an idea of his own opinion of what constitutes genius, though some of Longfellow's poems he pronounced 'perfect of their kind.'

"The evening of the day previous to that appointed for his departure from Richmond, Poe spent at my mother's. He declined to enter the parlors, where a number of visitors were

assembled, saying he preferred the more quiet sitting-room; and here I had a long and almost uninterrupted conversation with him. He spoke of his future, seeming to anticipate it with an eager delight, like that of youth. He declared that the last few weeks in the society of his old and new friends had been the happiest that he had known for many years, and that when he again left New York he should there leave behind all the trouble and vexation of his past life. On no occasion had I seen him so cheerful and hopeful as on this evening. 'Do you know,' he inquired, 'how I spent most of this morning? In writing a critique of your poems, to be accompanied by a biographical sketch. I intend it to be one of my best, and that it shall appear in the second number of 'The Stylus,'—so confident was he in regard to this magazine. In the course of the evening he showed me a letter just received from his 'friend Dr. Griswold,' in reply to one but recently written by Poe, wherein the latter had requested Dr. Griswold, in case of his sudden death, to become his literary executor. In this reply Dr. Griswold accepted the proposal, expressing himself as much flattered thereby, and writing in terms of friendly warmth and interest. It will be observed that this incident is a contradiction of his statement that previous to Poe's death he had no intimation of the latter's intention of appointing him his literary executor.

"In speaking of his own writings, Poe expressed his conviction that he had written his best poems, but that in prose he might yet surpass what he had already accomplished. He admitted that much he had said in praise of certain writers was not the genuine expression of his opinions. Before my ac-

quaintance with him I had read his critique on Mrs. Osgood in the *Southern Literary Messenger*, and had in my turn criticised the article, writing my remarks freely on the margin of the magazine. I especially disagreed with him in his estimate of the lines on 'Fanny Elsler' and 'Fanny's Error,'—ridiculing his suggested amendment of the latter. This copy of the magazine Mrs. Mackenzie afterward showed to Poe, and upon my expressing consternation thereat, she remarked laughingly: 'Don't be frightened; Edgar was delighted.' On this evening he alluded to the subject, saying: 'I am delighted to find you so truly critical; your opinions are really the counterpart of my own.' I was naturally surprised, when he added: 'You must not judge of me by what you find me saying in the magazines. Such expressions of opinion are necessarily modified by a thousand circumstances,—the wishes of editors, personal friendship, etc.' When I expressed surprise at his high estimate of a certain lady writer, he said: 'It is true, she is really commonplace, but her husband was kind to me'; and added: 'I cannot point an arrow against any woman.'

"Poe expressed great regret in being compelled to leave Richmond, on even so brief an absence. He would certainly, he said, be back in two weeks. He thanked my mother with graceful courtesy and warmth for her kindness and hospitality; and begged that we would write to him in New York, saying it would do him good.

"He was the last of the party to leave the house. We were standing on the portico, and after going a few steps he paused, turned, and again lifted his hat in a last adieu. At the moment a brilliant meteor appeared in the sky directly over

his head, and vanished in the east. We commented laughingly upon the incident; but I remembered it sadly afterward.

"That night he spent at Duncan's Lodge; and, as his friend said, sat late at his window, meditatively smoking, and seemingly disinclined for conversation. On the following morning he went into the city, accompanied by his friends Dr. Gibbon Carter and Dr. Mackenzie. The day was passed with them and others of his intimate friends. Late in the evening he entered the office of Dr. John Carter, and spent an hour in looking over the day's papers; then taking Dr. Carter's cane he went out, remarking that he would step across to Saddler's (a fashionable restaurant) and get supper. From the circumstance of his taking the cane, leaving his own in its place, it is probable that he had intended to return; but at the restaurant he met with some acquaintances who detained him until late, and then accompanied him to the Baltimore boat. According to their account, he was quite sober and cheerful to the last, remarking, as he took leave of them, that he would soon be in Richmond again.

"On this evening I had been summoned to see a friend who was dangerously ill. On the way I was met by Miss Poe, who delivered a note left for me by her brother, containing a MS. copy of 'Annie,'—a poem then almost unknown, and which I had expressed a wish to see. These strange prophetic lines I read at midnight, while the lifeless body of my friend lay in an adjoining chamber, and the awful shadow of death weighed almost forbodingly upon my spirit. Three days after, a friend came to me with the day's issue of the *Richmond Dispatch*. Without a word she pointed to a particular paragraph, where I read: 'Death of Edgar A. Poe, in Baltimore.'"

To the reminiscences of Mrs. Weiss,—which not only cover Poe's visit to Richmond, almost from the day of his arrival to the night of his departure with a cane belonging to one of his friends,—but which present him and his personality with a vividness not to be found elsewhere,—to this last appreciative, affectionate, and most womanly estimate of his life and character, little remains to be added. He left Richmond on the night of October 3d or 4th, one account says by the boat, another by the train, and reached Baltimore safely. From this point begins the obscurity which overshadows the last two or three days of his life,—an obscurity which, so far as I know, has never yet been entirely cleared up. It was believed at the time by his relatives in Baltimore that he drank with a friend while waiting between trains, in consequence of which he took a wrong train, and proceeded as far as Havre de Grace, whence he was brought back to Baltimore by the conductor of the Philadelphia train in a state bordering on delirium. It was the eve of an exciting municipal election, and as he wandered up and down the streets he was seized by the lawless agents of a political club, and shut up all night in a cellar. The next morning he was taken out, drugged, and made to vote in eleven different wards. The following day he was found in the back room of a "head-quarters," and removed to the hospital.

Twenty-six years after Poe's death, a physician who attended him while in the hospital concluded to publish his

recollections of his last moments and dying words. Why it did not occur to this medical person, Dr. J. J. Moran, to do this immediately after his death, when the world, as well as his friends, was more deeply interested in him than at present, and when his recollections could have been corroborated or refuted by living witnesses, we have to conjecture. We only know that his communication first saw the light in the columns of the *New York Herald* for October 28, 1875. It seems to have been called forth by the publicity which had been given to the erection of a proposed monument to Poe in Baltimore, a project which was carried into effect on the 17th of November, 1875, and to have been written at greater length than it appeared in the *Herald;* so, at least, I gather from a letter of Dr. Moran's, dated "Falls Church, Fairfax Co., Va., Jan. 17, 1875," and addressed to the editor of a New York journal, to whom he was desirous of disposing of his manuscript, the contents of which he roughly described. It contained, as it then stood,—at any rate, he claimed to know,—the exact time when Poe left Richmond, when he started for Philadelphia, and when he returned to Baltimore, with other particulars, which were omitted when it was printed in the *Herald.*

Dr. Moran's account of the last days of Poe is substantially as follows. I say substantially, and I should add briefly, for I have condensed it, and have rejected his recollection of Poe's excited and wandering talk, which I do not believe that he, or any other man under the

circumstances, could have reproduced *verbatim*, after a lapse of twenty-five or twenty-six years, the report of which reminds me of the wonderment of Byron after finishing Dunlap's "Life of George Frederick Cooke," that so drunken an actor should have found so sober a biographer. Thus then Dr. Moran:—Poe was brought in a hack to the Washington University Hospital, on Broadway, north of Baltimore Street, on the 7th of October, 1849. He had been found lying upon a bench in front of a large mercantile house on Light Street wharf. He was in a stupor, whether from liquor or opium was not at first known. A gentleman passing along the pavement noticed several persons collected about the spot, and looking in through the crowd was suddenly impressed with the face, and on close inspection recognized the poet. He had been there since early dawn. A policeman sent for a hack, and directed the driver to the above-mentioned hospital, of which Dr. Moran was at that time the resident physician. It was about ten o'clock in the morning when he was brought in. He was at once placed in a private room, carefully undressed, and critically examined. There was no smell of liquor upon his person or breath, and no delirium or tremor. His skin was pallid, with slight nausea at the stomach, and a strong disposition to sleep. He was sponged with lukewarm water, sinapisms were applied to his feet, thighs, and abdomen, and cold to his head, and the room was darkened. An experienced nurse was placed at the

threshold of his door, with orders to watch him closely, and prevent the slightest noise from without, and to give Dr. Moran notice of any sign of wakefulness or consciousness on his part. In about half an hour he awoke, and inquired where he was. The nurse summoned Dr. Moran, who drew his chair close to the bed, and taking one of his hands while he smoothed his forehead, asked him how he felt. He was miserable; was sick at the stomach, though not thirsty; and had a heavy feeling in the head. He could not say how long he had had it. He had been stopping at a hotel at Pratt Street, opposite the depôt, where he had left a trunk, containing manuscripts and papers, which he wished should be sent for. He inquired again where he was, and on being told that he was in the care of his friends, remarked that his best friend would be the man who would blow out his brains. Here his conversation, which had been coherent so far, began to grow wild, and Dr. Moran concluded to give him a cordial, which he drank, after which he appeared to sleep. At the end of an hour he awoke, sane enough to decline some liquor which was offered him by Dr. Moran, who, from what he had gathered from those who saw him on the wharf, was impressed with the idea that he was suffering from a too free use of it, and might be benefited by it at this juncture, but otherwise wandering in his mind and speech. He revived sufficiently to give the address of Mrs. Shelton, to whom he thought he was to have been married in ten days (Norfolk, Virginia), and Mrs. Maria Clemm

(Lowell, Mass.), and then relapsed into an unconscious state, during which his cousin, Neilson Poe, was sent for. He was partially roused after an hour or more, in order to be given a febrifuge mixture and a stimulant, which he received in a staring, dazed way, while the pupils of his eyes alternately dilated and contracted. A second physician who was present advised the use of wine, beef-tea, and gentle cordials. The dying man now raised his hand to his mouth as if he wanted to drink, and a small lump of ice was placed upon his tongue. A glass of water was then brought him, but he swallowed it with difficulty, though he managed to drink a wine-glass of beef-tea. This seemed to revive him: he opened his eyes, and fixing them upon a transom over his door he kept them unmoved for a moment. At last he whispered feebly: "Doctor, it 's all over; write 'Eddy is no more.'" His mind wandered, and his words grew wild, as the waves of life and death kept swaying to and fro in his breast. His eyes turned upward until the white balls were all that could be seen; muscular twitching and jerking set in, and with one general tremor all was over. He died about midnight on the 7th of October, 1849. Two days later all that was mortal of him was borne to the Westminster Burying-ground, at the corner of Fayette and Green streets, Baltimore, the old family burying-ground of the Poes. The spot selected for his grave was near the grave of his grandfather, General David Poe. There was a vacant place left, but it was filled about

twenty years afterward by the body of Mrs. Clemm, who died upward of eighty years old, in the same hospital where her Eddy expired, and was buried, at her own request, by his side.

Such was the brief, brilliant, but unhappy life, and such the melancholy death of Edgar Allan Poe, of whom it may well be said in the words of Dr. Johnson, that the events of his life are variously related, and all that can be told with certainty is, that he was poor.

R. H. STODDARD.

EDGAR A. POE.*

BY JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

THE situation of American literature is anomalous. It has no centre, or, if it have, it is like that of the sphere of Hermes. It is divided into many systems, each revolving round its several sun, and often presenting to the rest only the faint glimmer of a milk-and-water way. Our capital city, unlike London or Paris, is not a great central heart, from which life and vigor radiate to the extremities, but resembles more an isolated umbilicus, stuck down as near as may be to the centre of the land, and seeming rather to tell a legend of former usefulness than to serve any present need. Boston, New York, Philadelphia, each has its literature almost more distinct than those of the different dialects of Germany; and the Young Queen of the West has also one of her own, of which some articulate rumor barely has reached us dwellers by the Atlantic.

* The following notice of Mr. Poe's life and works was written at his own request, and accompanied a portrait of him published in *Graham's Magazine* for February, 1845. It is here given with a few alterations and omissions.

Perhaps there is no task more difficult than the just criticism of contemporary literature. It is even more grateful to give praise where it is needed than where it is deserved, and friendship so often seduces the iron stylus of justice into a vague flourish, that she writes what seems rather like an epitaph than a criticism. Yet if praise be given as an alms, we could not drop so poisonous a one into any man's hat. The critic's ink may suffer equally from too large an infusion of nutgalls or of sugar. But it is easier to be generous than to be just, and we might readily put faith in that fabulous direction to the hiding-place of truth, did we judge from the amount of water which we usually find mixed with it.

Remarkable experiences are usually confined to the inner life of imaginative men, but Mr. Poe's biography displays a vicissitude and peculiarity of interest such as is rarely met with. The offspring of a romantic marriage, and left an orphan at an early age, he was adopted by Mr. Allan, a wealthy Virginian, whose barren marriage-bed seemed the warranty of a large estate to the young poet. Having received a classical education in England, he returned home and entered the University of Virginia, where, after an extravagant course, followed by reformation at the last extremity, he was graduated with the highest honors of his class. Then came a boyish attempt to join the fortunes of the insurgent Greeks, which ended at St. Petersburg, where he got into difficulties through want of a passport, from which he was rescued by the

American consul, and sent home. He now entered the military academy at West Point, from which he obtained a dismissal on hearing of the birth of a son to his adopted father, by a second marriage, an event which cut off his expectations as an heir. The death of Mr. Allan, in whose will his name was not mentioned, soon after relieved him of all doubt in this regard, and he committed himself at once to authorship for support. Previously to this, however, he had published (in 1827) a small volume of poems, which soon ran through three editions, and excited high expectations of its author's future distinction in the minds of many competent judges.

That no certain augury can be drawn from a poet's earliest lispings there are instances enough to prove. Shakspeare's first poems, though brimful of vigor and youth and picturesqueness, give but a very faint promise of the directness, condensation, and overflowing moral of his maturer works. Perhaps, however, Shakspeare is hardly a case in point, his "Venus and Adonis" having been published, we believe, in his twenty-sixth year. Milton's Latin verses show tenderness, a fine eye for nature, and a delicate appreciation of classic models, but give no hint of the author of a new style in poetry. Pope's youthful pieces have all the sing-song, wholly unrelieved by the glittering malignity and eloquent irreligion of his later productions. Collins' callow namby-pamby died and gave no sign of the vigorous and original genius which he afterward displayed. We have never

thought that the world lost more in the "marvellous boy," Chatterton, than a very ingenious imitator of obscure and antiquated dulness. Where he becomes original (as it is called) the interest of ingenuity ceases and he becomes stupid. Kirke White's promises were endorsed by the respectable name of Mr. Southey, but surely with no authority from Apollo. They have the merit of a traditional piety, which, to our mind, if uttered at all, had been less objectionable in the retired closet of a diary, and in the sober raiment of prose. They do not clutch hold of the memory with the drowning pertinacity of Watts; neither have they the interest of his occasional simple, lucky beauty. Burns, having fortunately been rescued by his humble station from the contaminating society of the "best models," wrote well and naturally from the first. Had he been unfortunate enough to have had an educated taste, we should have had a series of poems from which, as from his letters, we could sift here and there a kernel from the mass of chaff. Coleridge's youthful efforts give no promise whatever of that poetical genius which produced at once the wildest, tenderest, most original, and most purely imaginative poems of modern times. Byron's "Hours of Idleness" would never find a reader except from an intrepid and indefatigable curiosity. In Wordsworth's first preludings there is but a dim foreboding of the creator of an era. From Southey's early poems a safer augury might have been drawn. They show the patient investigator, the close

student of history, and the unwearied explorer of the beauties of predecessors, but they give no assurances of a man who should add aught to the stock of household words, or to the rarer and more sacred delights of the fireside or the arbor. The earliest specimens of Shelley's poetic mind already, also, give tokens of that ethereal sublimation in which the spirit seems to soar above the regions of words, but leaves its body, the verse, to be entombed, without hope of resurrection, in a mass of them. Cowley is generally instanced as a wonder of precocity. But his early insipidities show only a capacity for rhyming and for the metrical arrangement of certain conventional combinations of words, a capacity wholly dependent on a delicate physical organization and an unhappy memory. An early poem is only remarkable when it displays an effort of *reason*, and the rudest verses in which we can trace some conception of the ends of poetry, are worth all the miracles of smooth juvenile versification. A school-boy, one would say, might acquire the regular see-saw of Pope merely by an association with the motion of the play-ground tilt.

Mr. Poe's early productions show that he could see through the verse to the spirit beneath, and that he already had a feeling that all the life and grace of the one must depend on and be modulated by the will of the other. We call them the most remarkable boyish poems that we have ever read. We know of none that can compare with them for maturity of purpose and a nice under-

standing of the effects of language and metre. Such pieces are only valuable when they display what we can only express by the contradictory phrase of *innate experience*. We copy one of the shorter poems, written when the author was only fourteen. There is a little dimness in the filling up, but the grace and symmetry of the outline are such as few poets ever attain. There is a smack of ambrosia about it.

TO HELEN.

Helen, thy beauty is to me
  Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
  The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
  To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
  Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
  To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
  How statue-like I see thee stand!
  The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
  Are Holy Land!

It is the *tendency* of the young poet that impresses us. Here is no "withering scorn," no heart "blighted" ere it has safely got into its teens, none of the drawing-room sansculottism which Byron had brought into vogue. All is limpid and serene, with a pleasant dash of the Greek Helicon in it. The melody of the whole, too, is remark-

able. It is not that kind which can be demonstrated arithmetically upon the tips of the fingers. It is of that finer sort which the inner ear alone can estimate. It seems simple, like a Greek column, because of its perfection. In a poem named "Ligeia," under which title he intended to personify the music of nature, our boy-poet gives us the following exquisite picture:

Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one,
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
Say, is it thy will,
On the breezes to toss,
Or, capriciously still,
Like the lone albatross,
Incumbent on night,
As she on the air,
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

John Neal, himself a man of genius, and whose lyre has been too long capriciously silent, appreciated the high merit of these and similar passages, and drew a proud horoscope for their author.

Mr. Poe had that indescribable something which men have agreed to call *genius*. No man could ever tell us precisely what it is, and yet there is none who is not inevitably aware of its presence and its power. Let talent writhe and contort itself as it may, it has no such magnetism. Larger of bone and sinew it may be, but the wings are wanting. Talent sticks fast to earth, and its most per-

fect works have still one foot of clay. Genius claims kindred with the very workings of Nature herself, so that a sunset shall seem like a quotation from Dante or Milton, and if Shakspeare be read in the very presence of the sea itself, his verses shall seem but nobler for the sublime criticism of ocean. Talent may make friends for itself, but only genius can give to its creations the divine power of winning love and veneration. Enthusiasm cannot cling to what itself is unenthusiastic, nor will he ever have disciples who has not himself impulsive zeal enough to be a disciple. Great wits are allied to madness only inasmuch as they are possessed and carried away by their demon, while talent keeps him, as Paracelsus did, securely prisoned in the pommel of its sword. To the eye of genius, the veil of the spiritual world is ever rent asunder, that it may perceive the ministers of good and evil who throng continually around it. No man of mere talent ever flung his inkstand at the devil.

When we say that Mr. Poe had genius, we do not mean to say that he has produced evidence of the highest. But to say that he possesses it at all is to say that he needs only zeal, industry, and a reverence for the trust reposed in him, to achieve the proudest triumphs and the greenest laurels. If we may believe the Longinuses and Aristotles of our newspapers, we have quite too many geniuses of the loftiest order to render a place among them at all desirable, whether for its hardness of attainment or its seclusion. The highest peak of our Parnassus is, accord-

ing to these gentlemen, by far the most thickly settled portion of the country, a circumstance which must make it an uncomfortable residence for individuals of a poetical temperament, if love of solitude be, as immemorial tradition asserts, a necessary part of their idiosyncrasy.

Mr. Poe has two of the prime qualities of genius, a faculty of vigorous yet minute analysis and a wonderful fecundity of imagination. The first of these faculties is as needful to the artist in words, as a knowledge of anatomy is to the artist in colors or in stone. This enables him to conceive truly, to maintain a proper relation of parts, and to draw a correct outline, while the second groups, fills up, and colors. Both of these Mr. Poe has displayed with singular distinctness in his prose works, the last predominating in his earlier tales, and the first in his later ones. In judging of the merit of an author, and assigning him his niche among our household gods, we have a right to regard him from our own point of view, and to measure him by our own standard. But, in estimating the amount of power displayed in his works, we must be governed by his own design, and, placing them by the side of his own ideal, find how much is wanting. We differ from Mr. Poe in his opinion of the objects of art. He esteems that object to be the creation of Beauty, and perhaps it is only in the definition of that word that we disagree with him. But in what we shall say of his writings, we shall take his own standard as our guide. The temple of the god of song is equally accessible from every side,

and there is room enough in it for all who bring offerings, or seek an oracle.

In his tales, Mr. Poe has chosen to exhibit his power chiefly in that dim region which stretches from the very utmost limits of the probable into the weird confines of superstition and unreality. He combines in a very remarkable manner two faculties which are seldom found united: a power of influencing the mind of the reader by the impalpable shadows of mystery, and a minuteness of detail which does not leave a pin or a button unnoticed. Both are, in truth, the natural results of the predominating quality of his mind, to which we have before alluded, analysis. It is this which distinguishes the artist. His mind at once reaches forward to the effect to be produced. Having resolved to bring about certain emotions in the reader, he makes all subordinate parts tend strictly to the common centre. Even his mystery is mathematical to his own mind. To him x is a known quantity all along. In any picture that he paints, he understands the chemical properties of all his colors. However vague some of his figures may seem, however formless the shadows, to him the outline is as clear and distinct as that of a geometrical diagram. For this reason Mr. Poe has no sympathy with *Mysticism.* The Mystic dwells *in* the mystery, is enveloped with it; it colors all his thoughts; it affects his optic nerve especially, and the commonest things get a rainbow edging from it. Mr. Poe, on the other hand, is

a spectator *ab extra.* He analyzes, he dissects, he watches

> —— "with an eye serene,
> The very pulse of the machine,"

for such it practically is to him, with wheels and cogs and piston-rods, all working to produce a certain end.

This analyzing tendency of his mind balances the poetical, and, by giving him the patience to be minute, enables him to throw a wonderful reality into his most unreal fancies. A monomania he paints with great power. He loves to dissect one of these cancers of the mind, and to trace all the subtle ramifications of its roots. In raising images of horror, also, he has a strange success; conveying to us sometimes by a dusky hint some terrible *doubt* which is the secret of all horror. He leaves to Imagination the task of finishing the picture, a task to which only she is competent.

> "For much imaginary work was there;
> Conceit deceitful, so compact, so kind,
> That for Achilles' image stood his spear
> Grasped in an armed hand; himself behind
> Was left unseen, save to the eye of mind."

Besides the merit of conception, Mr. Poe's writings have also that of form. His style is highly finished, graceful, and truly classical. It would be hard to find a living author who had displayed such varied powers. As an example of his style we would refer to one of his tales, "The House of Usher," in the first volume of his "Tales of the

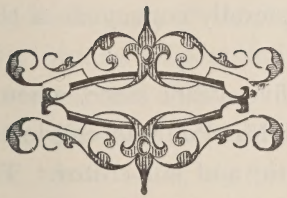
Grotesque and Arabesque." It has a singular charm for us, and we think that no one could read it without being strongly moved by its serene and sombre beauty. Had its author written nothing else, it would alone have been enough to stamp him as a man of genius and the master of a classic style. In this tale occurs, perhaps, the most beautiful of his poems.

The great masters of imagination have seldom resorted to the vague and the unreal as sources of effect. They have not used dread and horror alone, but only in combination with other qualities, as means of subjugating the fancies of their readers. The loftiest muse has ever a household and fireside charm about her. Mr. Poe's secret lies mainly in the skill with which he has employed the strange fascination of mystery and terror. In this his success is so great and striking as to deserve the name of art, not artifice. We cannot call his materials the noblest or purest, but we must concede to him the highest merit of construction.

As a critic, Mr. Poe was æsthetically deficient. Unerring in his analysis of dictions, metres, and plots, he seemed wanting in the faculty of perceiving the profounder ethics of art. His criticisms, are, however, distinguished for scientific precision and coherence of logic. They have the exactness and, at the same time, the coldness of mathematical demonstrations. Yet they stand in strikingly refreshing contrast with the vague generalisms and sharp personalities of the day. If deficient in

warmth, they are also without the heat of partisanship. They are especially valuable as illustrating the great truth, too generally overlooked, that analytic power is a subordinate quality of the critic.

On the whole, it may be considered certain that Mr. Poe has attained an individual eminence in our literature, which he will keep. He has given proof of power and originality. He has done that which could only be done once with success or safety, and the imitation or repetition of which would produce weariness.



DEATH OF EDGAR A. POE.*

BY N. P. WILLIS.

THE ancient fable of two antagonistic spirits imprisoned in one body, equally powerful and having the complete mastery by turns—of one man, that is to say, inhabited by both a devil and an angel—seems to have been realized, if all we hear is true, in the character of the extraordinary man whose name we have written above. Our own impression of the nature of Edgar A. Poe differs in some important degree, however, from that which has been generally conveyed in the notices of his death.

Some four or five years since, when editing a daily paper in this city, Mr. Poe was employed by us for several months as critic and sub-editor. This was our first personal acquaintance with him. He resided with his wife and mother at Fordham, a few miles out of town, but was at his desk in the office from nine in the morning till the evening paper went to press. With the highest

* These remarks were published by Mr. Willis, in the *Home Journal*, on the Saturday following Mr. Poe's death.

admiration for his genius, and a willingness to let it atone for more than ordinary irregularity, we were led by common report to expect a very capricious attention to his duties, and occasionally a scene of violence and difficulty. Time went on, however, and he was invariably punctual and industrious. With his pale, beautiful, and intellectual face as a reminder of what genius was in him it was impossible, of course, not to treat him always with deferential courtesy, and to our occasional request that he would not probe too deep in a criticism, or that he would erase a passage colored too highly with his resentments against society and mankind, he readily and courteously assented —far more yielding than most men, we thought, on points so excusably sensitive. With a prospect of taking the lead in another periodical he at last voluntarily gave up his employment with us, and through all this considerable period we had seen but one presentment of the man—a quiet, patient, industrious, and most gentlemanly person, commanding the utmost respect and good feeling by his unvarying deportment and ability.

Residing as he did in the country, we never met Mr. Poe in hours of leisure; but he frequently called on us afterward at our place of business, and we met him often in the street—invariably the same sad-mannered, winning, and refined gentleman such as we had always known him. It was by rumor only, up to the day of his death, that we knew of any other development of manner or character. We heard from one who knew him well (what should be

stated in all mention of his lamentable irregularities) that with a *single glass* of wine his whole nature was reversed, the demon became uppermost, and, though none of the usual signs of intoxication were visible, his *will* was palpably insane. Possessing his reasoning faculties in excited activity at such times, and seeking his acquaintances with his wonted look and memory, he easily seemed personating only another phase of his natural character, and was accused, accordingly, of insulting arrogance and bad-heartedness. In this reversed character, we repeat, it was never our chance to see him. We know it from hearsay, and we mention it in connection with his sad infirmity of physical constitution; which puts it upon very nearly the ground of a temporary and almost irresponsible insanity.

The arrogance, vanity, and depravity of heart of which Mr. Poe was generally accused seem, to us, referable altogether to this reversed phase of his character. Under that degree of intoxication which only acted upon him by demonizing his sense of truth and right, he doubtless said and did much that was wholly irreconcilable with his better nature; but when himself, and as we knew him only, his modesty and unaffected humility, as to his own deservings, were a constant charm to his character. His letters (of which the constant application for autographs has taken from us, we are sorry to confess, the greater portion) exhibited this quality very strongly. In one of the carelessly written notes of which we chance still to retain possession, for instance, he speaks of "The Raven"

—that extraordinary poem which electrified the world of imaginative readers, and has become the type of a school of poetry of its own,—and, in evident earnest, attributes its success to the few words of commendation with which we had prefaced it in this paper. It will throw light on his sane character to give a literal copy of the note:

"FORDHAM, April 20, 1849.

"MY DEAR WILLIS:—The poem which I enclose, and which I am so vain as to hope you will like, in some respects, has been just published in a paper for which sheer necessity compels me to write now and then. It pays well, as times go; but unquestionably it ought to pay ten prices, for whatever I send it I feel I am consigning to the tomb of the Capulets. The verses accompanying this may I beg you to take out of the tomb and bring them to light in the *Home Journal?* If you can oblige me so far as to copy them, I do not think it will be necessary to say 'From the——,—that would be too bad;—and, perhaps, 'From a late —— paper' would do.

"I have not forgotten how a 'good word in season' from you made 'The Raven' and made 'Ulalume' (which, by the way, people have done me the honor of attributing to you), therefore I *would* ask you (if I dared) to say something of these lines—if they please you.

"Truly yours ever,

"EDGAR A. POE."

In double proof—of his earnest disposition to do the best for himself, and of the trustful and grateful nature which has been denied him—we give another of the only three of his notes which we chance to retain:

"FORDHAM, January 22, 1848.

"MY DEAR MR. WILLIS:—I am about to make an effort at reëstablishing myself in the literary world, and *feel* that I may depend upon your aid.

"My general aim is to start a magazine, to be called 'The Stylus'; but it would be useless to me, even when established, if not entirely out of the control of a publisher. I mean, therefore, to get up a Journal which shall be *my own* at all points. With this end in view, I must get a list of, at least, five hundred subscribers to begin with,—nearly two hundred I have already. I propose, however, to go South and West, among my personal and literary friends,—old college and West Point acquaintances,—and see what I can do. In order to get the means for taking the first step, I propose to lecture at the Society Library, on Thursday, the 3d of February, and, that there may be no cause of *squabbling*, my subject shall *not be literary* at all. I have chosen a broad text—'The Universe.'

"Having thus given you *the facts* of the case, I leave all the rest to the suggestions of your own tact and generosity. Gratefuly—*most* gratefully—

"Your friend always,

"EDGAR A. POE."

Brief and chance-taken, as these letters are, we think they sufficienty prove the existence of the very qualities denied to Mr. Poe—humility, willingness to persevere, belief in another's kindness, and capability of cordial and grateful friendship! Such he assuredly was *when sane*.

Such only he has invariably seemed to us, in all we have happened personally to know of him, through a friendship of five or six years. And so much easier is it to believe what we have seen and known, than what we *hear of* only, that we remember him but with admiration and respect,—these descriptions of him, when morally insane, seeming to us like portraits, painted in sickness, of a man we have only known in health.

But there is another more touching and far more forcible evidence that there *was goodness* in Edgar A. Poe. To reveal it, we are obliged to venture upon the lifting of the veil which sacredly covers grief and refinement in poverty; but we think it may be excused, if so we can brighten the memory of the poet, even were there not a more needed and immediate service which it may render to the nearest link broken by his death.

Our first knowledge of Mr. Poe's removal to this city was by a call which we received from a lady who introduced herself to us as the mother of his wife. She was in search of employment for him, and she excused her errand by mentioning that he was ill, that her daughter was a confirmed invalid, and that their circumstances were such as compelled her taking it upon herself. The countenance of this lady, made beautiful and saintly with an evidently complete giving up of her life to privation and sorrowful tenderness, her gentle and mournful voice urging its plea, her long-forgotten but habitually and unconsciously refined manners, and her appealing and yet

appreciative mention of the claims and abilities of her son, disclosed at once the presence of one of those angels upon earth that women in adversity can be. It was a hard fate that she was watching over. Mr. Poe wrote with fastidious difficulty, and in a style too much above the popular level to be well paid. He was always in pecuniary difficulty, and, with his sick wife, frequently in want of the merest necessaries of life. Winter after winter, for years, the most touching sight to us, in this whole city, has been that tireless minister to genius, thinly and insufficiently clad, going from office to office with a poem, or an article on some literary subject, to sell,—sometimes simply pleading in a broken voice that he was ill, and begging for him,—mentioning nothing but that "he was ill," whatever might be the reason for his writing nothing, —and never, amid all her tears and recitals of distress, suffering one syllable to escape her lips that could convey a doubt of him, or a complaint, or a lessening of pride in his genius and good intentions. Her daughter died a year and a half since, but she did not desert him. She continued his ministering angel—living with him, caring for him, guarding him against exposure, and, when he was carried away by temptation, amid grief and the loneliness of feelings unreplied to, and awoke from his self-abandonment prostrated in destitution and suffering, *begging* for him still. If woman's devotion, born with a first love and fed with human passion, hallows its object, as it is allowed to do, what does not a devotion like this

—pure, disinterested, and holy as the watch of an invisible spirit—say for him who inspired it?

We have a letter before us, written by this lady, Mrs. Clemm, on the morning in which she heard of the death of this object of her untiring care. It is merely a request that we would call upon her, but we will copy a few of its words—sacred as its privacy is—to warrant the truth of the picture we have drawn above, and add force to the appeal we wish to make for her:

"I have this morning heard of the death of my darling Eddie. * * * Can you give me any circumstances or particulars? * * * Oh! do not desert your poor friend in this bitter affliction. * * * Ask Mr. —— to come, as I must deliver a message to him from my poor Eddie. * * * I need not ask you to notice his death and to speak well of him. I know you will. But say what an affectionate son he was to me, his poor desolate mother." * * *

To hedge round a grave with respect, what choice is there, between the relinquished wealth and honors of the world, and the story of such a woman's unrewarded devotion! Risking what we do, in delicacy, by making it public, we feel—other reasons aside—that it betters the world to make known that there are such ministrations to its erring and gifted. What we have said will speak to some hearts. There are those who will be glad to know how the lamp, whose light of poetry has beamed on their far-away recognition, was watched over with care

and pain,—that they may send to her, who is more darkened than they by its extinction, some token of their sympathy. She is destitute, and alone. If any, far or near, will send to us what may aid and cheer her through the remainder of her life, we will joyfully place it in her hands.

Lowell Feb. 17th 1851.

Dear Sir

I have long thought I would write to you since the death of my beloved son, (E A Poe) but have always been prevented by ill health, and a fear that my letter would not be welcome to you. I have drunk deeply oh how deeply of the cup of sorrow. I have lost all my dear ones, I have seen them fade and die without the power of saving them. But I have lived through it, and am willing to live and suffer all that God chooses to afflict me with. The publisher of my poor Eddies works can only for the present allow me as many copies of the work as I chose to dispose of among my friends, but a continued state of ill health and a delicacy of feeling prevents my availing myself of this privilege except through the kindness of a few friends who have disposed of some of them for me. Cannot you oblige me so greatly as to use your influence with a few of your friends, and dispose of a few copies for me. The retail price is $3.75. for the three volumes, but I will only ask 3 dollars, for the set apiece. I am most desirous of leaving this place as the climate does not agree with me, but have not the means of doing so. Will you not write to me and tell me something about your family, and Brothers? what has become of your Brother Wm? If you think you can oblige me by attending to my request, and will let me know how to send them I will immediately do so. The sale of a very few copies will greatly benefit me. If you can advance part of the pay it will greatly relieve me, as I am at present without means entirely.

God bless you, your friend and relative. Maria Clemm.

POEMS.

PREFACE TO THE POEMS.

THESE trifles are collected and republished chiefly with a view to their redemption from the many improvements to which they have been subjected while going at random "the rounds of the press." I am naturally anxious that what I have written should circulate as I wrote it, if it circulate at all. In defence of my own taste, nevertheless, it is incumbent upon me to say that I think nothing in this volume of much value to the public, or very creditable to myself. Events not to be controlled have prevented me from making, at any time, any serious effort in what, under happier circumstances, would have been the field of my choice. With me poetry has not been a purpose, but a passion; and the passion should be held in reverence; they must not—they cannot at will be excited, with an eye to the paltry compensations, or the more paltry commendations, of mankind.

E. A. P.

THE POETIC PRINCIPLE.

IN speaking of the Poetic Principle, I have no design to be either thorough or profound. While discussing, very much at random, the essentiality of what we call Poetry, my principal purpose will be to cite for consideration, some few of those minor English or American poems which best suit my own taste, or which, upon my own fancy, have left the most definite impression. By "minor poems" I mean, of course, poems of little length. And here, in the beginning permit me to say a few words in regard to a somewhat peculiar principle, which, whether rightfully or wrongfully, has always had its influence in my own critical estimate of the poem. I hold that a long poem does not exist. I maintain that the phrase, "a long poem," is simply a flat contradiction in terms.

I need scarcely observe that a poem deserves its title only inasmuch as it excites, by elevating the soul. The value of the poem is in the ratio of this elevating excitement. But all excitements are, through a psychal necessity, transient. That degree of excitement which would entitle a poem to be so called at all, cannot be sustained through-

out a composition of any great length. After the lapse of half an hour, at the very utmost, it flags—fails—a revulsion ensues—and then the poem is, in effect, and in fact, no longer such.

There are, no doubt, many who have found difficulty in reconciling the critical dictum that the "Paradise Lost" is to be devoutly admired throughout, with the absolute impossibility of maintaining for it, during perusal, the amount of enthusiasm which that critical dictum would demand. This great work, in fact, is to be regarded as poetical, only when, losing sight of that vital requisite in all works of Art, Unity, we view it merely as a series of minor poems. If, to preserve its Unity—its totality of effect or impression—we read it (as would be necessary) at a single sitting, the result is but a constant alternation of excitement and depression. After a passage of what we feel to be true poetry, there follows, inevitably, a passage of platitude which no critical prejudgment can force us to admire; but if upon completing the work, we read it again; omitting the first book—that is to say, commencing with the second—we shall be surprised at now finding that admirable which we before condemned—that damnable which we had previously so much admired. It follows from all this that the ultimate, aggregate, or absolute effect of even the best epic under the sun, is a nullity:—and this is precisely the fact.

In regard to the Iliad, we have, if not positive proof,

at least very good reason, for believing it intended as a series of lyrics; but, granting the epic intention, I can say only that the work is based in an imperfect sense of Art. The modern epic is, of the supposititious ancient model, but an inconsiderate and blindfold imitation. But the day of these artistic anomalies is over. If, at any time, any very long poem *were* popular in reality—which I doubt—it is at least clear that no very long poem will ever be popular again.

That the extent of a poetical work is, *ceteris paribus*, the measure of its merit, seems undoubtedly, when we thus state it, a proposition sufficiently absurd—yet we are indebted for it to the quarterly Reviews. Surely there can be nothing in mere *size*, abstractly considered there can be nothing in mere *bulk*, so far as a volume is concerned, which has so continuously elicited admiration from these saturnine pamphlets! A mountain, to be sure, by the mere sentiment of physical magnitude which it conveys, *does* impress us with a sense of the sublime—but no man is impressed after *this* fashion by the material grandeur of even "The Columbiad." Even the Quarterlies have not instructed us to be so impressed by it. *As yet*, they have not *insisted* on our estimating Lamartine by the cubic foot, or Pollock by the pound—but what else are we to *infer* from their continual prating about "sustained effort?" If, by "sustained effort," any little gentleman has accomplished an epic, let us frankly commend him for the effort—if this

indeed be a thing commendable,—but let us forbear praising the epic on the effort's account. It is to be hoped that common-sense, in the time to come, will prefer deciding upon a work of Art, rather by the impression it makes—by the effect it produces—than by the time it took to impress the effect, or by the amount of "sustained effort" which had been found necessary in effecting the impression. The fact is, that perseverance is one thing and genius quite another—nor can all the Quarterlies in Christendom confound them. By-and-by, this proposition, with many which I have been just urging, will be received as self-evident. In the meantime, by being generally condemned as falsities, they will not be essentially damaged as truths.

On the other hand, it is clear that a poem may be improperly brief. Undue brevity degenerates into mere epigrammatism. A *very* short poem, while now and then producing a brilliant or vivid, never produces a profound or enduring, effect. There must be the steady pressing down of the stamp upon the wax. De Béranger has wrought innumerable things, pungent and spirit-stirring; but, in general, they have been too imponderous to stamp themselves deeply into the public opinion; and thus, as so many feathers of fancy, have been blown aloft only to be whistled down the wind.

A remarkable instance of the effect of undue brevity in depressing a poem—in keeping it out of the popular view—is afforded by the following exquisite little Serenade:

I arise from dreams of thee
  In the first sweet sleep of night,
When the winds are breathing low,
  And the stars are shining bright.
I arise from dreams of thee,
  And a spirit in my feet
Has led me—who knows how?—
  To thy chamber-window, sweet!

The wandering airs they faint
  On the dark, the silent stream—
The champak odors fail
  Like sweet thoughts in a dream;
The nightingale's complaint,
  It dies upon her heart,
As I must die on thine,
  Oh, beloved as thou art!

Oh, lift me from the grass!
  I die, I faint, I fail!
Let thy love in kisses rain
  On my lips and eyelids pale.
My cheek is cold and white, alas!
  My heart beats loud and fast;
Oh, press it close to thine again,
  Where it will break at last!

Very few, perhaps, are familiar with these lines—yet no less a poet than Shelley is their author. Their warm, yet delicate and ethereal imagination will be appreciated by all—but by none so thoroughly as by him who has himself arisen from sweet dreams of one beloved, to bathe in the aromatic air of a southern midsummer night.

One of the finest poems by Willis—the very best, in my opinion, which he has ever written—has, no doubt, through this same defect of undue brevity, been kept

back from its proper position, not less in the critical than in the popular view.

The shadows lay along Broadway,
'T was near the twilight-tide—
And slowly there a lady fair
Was walking in her pride.
Alone walk'd she; but, viewlessly,
Walk'd spirits at her side.

Peace charm'd the street beneath her feet,
And Honor charm'd the air;
And all astir looked kind on her,
And call'd her good as fair—
For all God ever gave to her,
She kept with chary care.

She kept with care her beauties rare
From lovers warm and true—
For her heart was cold to all but gold,
And the rich came not to woo—
But honored well are charms to sell
If priests the selling do.

Now walking there was one more fair—
A slight girl, lily-pale;
And she had unseen company
To make the spirit quail—
'Twixt Want and Scorn she walk'd forlorn,
And nothing could avail.

No mercy now can clear her brow
For this world's peace to pray;
For, as love's wild prayer dissolved in air,
Her woman's heart gave way!—
But the sin forgiven by Christ in Heaven
By man is cursed alway!

In this composition we find it difficult to recognize the Willis who has written so many mere "verses of society."

The lines are not only richly ideal, but full of energy; while they breathe an earnestness—an evident sincerity of sentiment—for which we look in vain throughout all the other works of this author.

While the epic mania—while the idea that, to merit in poetry, prolixity is indispensable—has, for some years past, been gradually dying out of the public mind, by mere dint of its own absurdity, we find it succeeded by a heresy too palpably false to be long tolerated, but one which, in the brief period it has already endured, may be said to have accomplished more in the corruption of our Poetical Literature than all its other enemies combined. I allude to the heresy of *The Didactic*. It has been assumed, tacitly and avowedly, directly and indirectly, that the ultimate object of all Poetry is Truth. Every poem, it is said, should inculcate a moral; and by this moral is the poetical merit of the work to be adjudged. We Americans especially have patronized this happy idea; and we Bostonians, very especially, have developed it in full. We have taken it into our heads that to write a poem simply for the poem's sake, and to acknowledge such to have been our design, would be to confess ourselves radically wanting in the true Poetic dignity and force:—but the simple fact is, that, would we but permit ourselves to look into our own souls, we should immediately there discover that under the sun there neither exists nor *can* exist any work more thoroughly dignified—more supremely noble than this very poem—this poem *per se*—this poem which

is a poem and nothing more—this poem written solely for the poem's sake.

With as deep a reverence for the True as ever inspired the bosom of man, I would, nevertheless, limit, in some measure, its modes of inculcation. I would limit to enforce them. I would not enfeeble them by dissipation. The demands of Truth are severe; she has no sympathy with the myrtles. All *that* which is so indispensable in Song, is precisely all *that* with which *she* has nothing whatever to do. It is but making her a flaunting paradox, to wreathe her in gems and flowers. In enforcing a truth, we need severity rather than efflorescence of language. We must be simple, precise, terse. We must be cool, calm, unimpassioned. In a word, we must be in that mood which, as nearly as possible, is the exact converse of the poetical. *He* must be blind indeed who does not perceive the radical and chasmal differences between the truthful and the poetical modes of inculcation. He must be theory-mad beyond redemption who, in spite of these differences, shall still persist in attempting to reconcile the obstinate oils and waters of Poetry and Truth.

Dividing the world of mind into its three most immediately obvious distinctions, we have the Pure Intellect, Taste, and the Moral Sense. I place Taste in the middle, because it is just this position which, in the mind, it occupies. It holds intimate relations with either extreme; but from the Moral Sense is separated by so faint a difference that Aristotle has not hesitated to place some of its oper-

ations among the virtues themselves. Nevertheless, we find the *offices* of the trio marked with a sufficient distinction. Just as the intellect concerns itself with Truth, so Taste informs us of the Beautiful, while the Moral Sense is regardful of Duty. Of this latter, while Conscience teaches the obligation, and Reason the expediency, Taste contents herself with displaying the charms :—waging war upon Vice solely on the ground of her deformity—her disproportion—her animosity to the fitting, to the appropriate, to the harmonious—in a word, to Beauty.

An immortal instinct, deep within the spirit of man, is thus, plainly, a sense of the Beautiful. This it is which administers to his delight in the manifold forms, and sounds, and odors, and sentiments amid which he exists. And just as the lily is repeated in the lake, or the eyes of Amaryllis in the mirror, so is the mere oral or written repetition of these forms, and sounds, and colors, and odors, and sentiments, a duplicate source of delight. But this mere repetition is not poetry. He who shall simply sing, with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odors, and colors, and sentiments, which greet *him* in common with all mankind—he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. This thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of

his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us—but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity alone. And thus when by Poetry—or when by Music, the most entrancing of the Poetic moods—we find ourselves melted into tears—not as the Abbaté Gravia supposes—through excess of pleasure, but through a certain, petulant, impatient sorrow at our inability to grasp *now* wholly, here on earth, at once and forever, those divine and rapturous joys, of which *through* the poem, or *through* the music, we attain to but brief and indeterminate glimpses.

The struggle to apprehend the supernal Loveliness—this struggle, on the part of souls fittingly constituted—has given to the world all *that* which it (the world) has ever been enabled at once to understand and *to feel* as poetic.

The Poetic Sentiment, of course, may develop itself in various modes—in Painting, in Sculpture, in Architecture, in the Dance—very especially in Music,—and very peculiarly, and with a wide field, in the composition of the Landscape Garden. Our present theme, however, has regard only to its manifestation in words. And here let me speak briefly on the topic of rhythm. Contenting

myself with the certainty that Music, in its various modes of metre, rhythm, and rhyme, is of so vast a moment in Poetry as never to be wisely rejected—is so vitally important an adjunct, that he is simply silly who declines its assistance, I will not now pause to maintain its absolute essentiality. It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles—the creation of supernal Beauty. It *may* be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained *in fact*. We are often made to feel, with a shivering delight, that from an earthly harp are stricken notes which *cannot* have been unfamiliar to the angels. And thus there can be little doubt that in the union of Poetry with Music in its popular sense, we shall find the widest field for the Poetic development. The old Bards and Minnesingers had advantages which we do not possess—and Thomas Moore, singing his own songs, was, in the most legitimate manner, perfecting them as poems.

To recapitulate, then:—I would define, in brief, the Poetry of words as *The Rhythmical Creation of Beauty*. Its sole arbiter is Taste. With the Intellect or with the Conscience, it has only collateral relations. Unless incidentally, it has no concern whatever either with Duty or with Truth.

A few words, however, in explanation. *That* pleasure which is at once the most pure, the most elevating, and the most intense, is derived, I maintain, from the contem-

plation of the Beautiful. In the contemplation of Beauty we alone find it possible to attain that pleasurable elevation, or excitement, *of the soul*, which we recognize as the Poetic Sentiment, and which is so easily distinguished from Truth, which is the satisfaction of the Reason, or from Passion, which is the excitement of the Heart. I make Beauty, therefore,—using the word as inclusive of the sublime,—I make Beauty the province of the poem, simply because it is an obvious rule of Art that effects should be made to spring as directly as possible from their causes—no one as yet having been weak enough to deny that the peculiar elevation in question is at least *most readily* attainable in the poem. It by no means follows, however, that the incitements of Passion, or the precepts of Duty, or even the lessons of Truth, may not be introduced into a poem, and with advantage; for they may subserve, incidentally, in various ways, the general purposes of the work; but the true artist will always contrive to tone them down in proper subjection to that *Beauty* which is the atmosphere and the real essence of the poem.

I cannot better introduce the few poems which I shall present for your consideration, than by the citation of the Proem to Mr. Longfellow's "Waif":

> THE day is done, and the darkness
> Falls from the wings of Night,
> As a feather is wafted downward
> From an Eagle in his flight.

I see the lights of the village
Gleam through the rain and the mist,
And a feeling of sadness comes o'er me,
That my soul cannot resist;

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

Come, read to me some poem,
Some simple and heartfelt lay,
That shall soothe this restless feeling
And banish the thoughts of day.

Not from the grand old masters,
Not from the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

For, like strains of martial music,
Their mighty thoughts suggest
Life's endless toil and endeavor;
And to-night I long for rest.

Read from some humbler poet,
Whose songs gushed from his heart,
As showers from the clouds of summer,
Or tears from the eyelids start;

Who through long days of labor,
And nights devoid of ease,
Still heard in his soul the music
Of wonderful melodies.

Such songs have power to quiet
The restless pulse of care,
And come like the benediction
That follows after prayer.

Then read from the treasured volume
The poem of thy choice,
And lend to the rhyme of the poet
The beauty of thy voice.

And the night shall be filled with music,
And the cares, that infest the day,
Shall fold their tents, like the Arabs,
And as silently steal away.

With no great range of imagination, these lines have been justly admired for their delicacy of expression. Some of the images are very effective. Nothing can be better than—

———— the bards sublime,
Whose distant footsteps echo
Through the corridors of time.

The idea of the last quatrain is also very effective. The poem, on the whole, however, is chiefly to be admired for the graceful *insouciance* of its metre, so well in accordance with the character of the sentiments, and especially for the *ease* of the general manner. This "ease," or naturalness, in a literary style, it has long been the fashion to regard as ease in appearance alone—as a point of really difficult attainment. But not so,—a natural manner is difficult only to him who should never meddle with it—to the unnatural. It is but the result of writing with the understanding, or with the instinct, that *the tone*, in composition, should always be that which the mass of mankind would adopt—and must perpetually vary, of course, with the occasion. The author who, after the fashion

of the *North American Review*, should be, upon *all* occasions, merely "quiet," must necessarily, upon *many* occasions, be simply silly, or stupid; and has no more right to be considered "easy," or "natural," than a Cockney exquisite, or than the sleeping Beauty in the wax-works.

Among the minor poems of Bryant, none has so much impressed me as the one which he entitles "June." I quote only a portion of it:

There, through the long, long summer hours,
The golden light should lie,
And thick, young herbs and groups of flowers
Stand in their beauty by.
The oriole should build and tell
His love-tale, close beside my cell;
The idle butterfly
Should rest him there, and there be heard
The housewife-bee and humming-bird.

And what, if cheerful shouts, at noon,
Come, from the village sent,
Or songs of maids, beneath the moon,
With fairy laughter blent?
And what if, in the evening light,
Betrothèd lovers walk in sight
Of my low monument?
I would the lovely scene around
Might know no sadder sight nor sound.

I know, I know I should not see
The season's glorious show,
Nor would its brightness shine for me,
Nor its wild music flow;
But if, around my place of sleep,

The friends I love should come to weep,
They might not haste to go.
Soft airs, and song, and light, and bloom
Should keep them, lingering by my tomb.

These to their soften'd hearts should bear
The thought of what has been,
And speak of one who cannot share
The gladness of the scene;
Whose part in all the pomp that fills
The circuit of the summer hills,
Is—that his grave is green;
And deeply would their hearts rejoice
To hear again his living voice.

The ryhthmical flow, here, is even voluptuous—nothing could be more melodious. The poem has always affected me in a remarkable manner. The intense melancholy which seems to well up, perforce, to the surface of all the poet's cheerful sayings about his grave, we find thrilling us to the soul—while there is the truest poetic elevation in the thrill. The impression left is one of a pleasurable sadness. And if, in the remaining compositions which I shall introduce to you, there be more or less of a similar tone always apparent, let me remind you that (how or why we know not) this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty. It is, nevertheless,

A feeling of sadness and longing,
That is not akin to pain,
And resembles sorrow only
As the mist resembles the rain.

The taint of which I speak is clearly perceptible even

in a poem so full of brilliancy and spirit as the "Health" of Edward C. Pinkney:

I fill this cup to one made up
  Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
  The seeming paragon;
To whom the better elements
  And kindly stars have given
A form so fair, that, like the air,
  'T is less of earth than heaven.

Her every tone is music's own,
  Like those of morning birds,
And something more than melody
  Dwells ever in her words:
The coinage of her heart are they,
  And from her lips each flows
As one may see the burden'd bee
  Forth issue from the rose.

Affections are as thoughts to her,
  The measures of her hours;
Her feelings have the fragrancy,
  The freshness of young flowers;
And lovely passions, changing oft,
  So fill her, she appears
The image of themselves by turns,—
  The idol of past years!

Of her bright face one glance will trace
  A picture on the brain,
And of her voice in echoing hearts
  A sound must long remain;
But memory, such as mine of her,
  So very much endears,
When death is nigh my latest sigh
  Will not be life's, but hers.

I fill'd this cup to one made up
Of loveliness alone,
A woman, of her gentle sex
The seeming paragon—
Her health! and would on earth there stood
Some more of such a frame,
That life might be all poetry,
And weariness a name.

It was the misfortune of Mr. Pinkney to have been born too far south. Had he been a New Englander, it is probable that he would have been ranked as the first of American lyrists, by that magnanimous cabal which has so long controlled the destinies of American Letters, in conducting the thing called the *North American Review*. The poem just cited is especially beautiful; but the poetic elevation which it induces, we must refer chiefly to our sympathy in the poet's enthusiasm. We pardon his hyperboles for the evident earnestness with which they are uttered.

It is by no means my design, however, to expatiate upon the *merits* of what I should read you. These will necessarily speak for themselves. Boccalini, in his "Advertisements from Parnassus," tells us that Zoilus once presented Apollo a very caustic criticism upon a very admirable book—whereupon the god asked him for the beauties of the work. He replied that he only busied himself about the errors. On hearing this, Apollo, handing him a sack of unwinnowed wheat, bade him pick out *all the chaff* for his reward.

Now this fable answers very well as a hit at the critics—

but I am by no means sure that the god was in the right. I am by no means certain that the true limits of the critical duty are not grossly misunderstood. Excellence, in a poem especially, may be considered in the light of an axiom, which need only be properly *put* to become self-evident. It is *not* excellence if it requires to be demonstrated as such:—and thus, to point out too particularly the merits of a work of Art, is to admit that they are *not* merits altogether.

Among the "Melodies" of Thomas Moore, is one whose distinguished character as a poem proper seems to have been singularly left out of view. I allude to his lines beginning: "Come, rest in this bosom." The intense energy of their expression is not surpassed by any thing in Byron. There are two of the lines in which a sentiment is conveyed that embodies the *all in all* of the divine passion of Love—a sentiment which, perhaps, has found its echo in more, and in more passionate, human hearts than any other single sentiment ever embodied in words:

> Come, rest in this bosom, my own stricken deer,
> Though the herd have fled from thee, thy home is still here;
> Here still is the smile that no cloud can o'ercast,
> And a heart and a hand all thy own to the last.
>
> Oh! what was love made for, if 't is not the same
> Through joy and through torment, through glory and shame?
> I know not, I ask not, if guilt 's in that heart,
> I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art

Thou hast call'd me thy Angel in moments of bliss.
And thy Angel I 'll be, 'mid the horrors of this,—
Through the furnace, unshrinking, thy steps to pursue,
And shield thee, and save thee,—or perish there too !

It has been the fashion, of late days, to deny Moore Imagination, while granting him Fancy—a distinction originating with Coleridge—than whom no man more fully comprehended the great powers of Moore. The fact is, that the fancy of this poet so far predominates over all his other faculties, and over the fancy of all other men, as to have induced, very naturally, the idea that he is fanciful *only*. But never was there a greater mistake. Never was a grosser wrong done the fame of a true poet. In the compass of the English language I can call to mind no poem more profoundly, more weirdly *imaginative*, in the best sense, than the lines commencing: "I would I were by that dim lake," which are the composition of Thomas Moore. I regret that I am unable to remember them.

One of the noblest—and, speaking of Fancy, one of the most singularly fanciful—of modern poets, was Thomas Hood. His "Fair Ines" had always, for me, an inexpressible charm:

Oh ! saw ye not fair Ines?
She 's gone into the West,
To dazzle when the sun is down,
And rob the world of rest :
She took our daylight with her,
The smiles that we love best,
With morning blushes on her cheek,
And pearls upon her breast.

Oh ! turn again, fair Ines,
Before the fall of night,
For fear the moon should shine alone,
And stars unrivall'd bright ;
And blessèd will the lover be
That walks beneath their light,
And breathes the love against thy cheek
I dare not even write !

Would I had been, fair Ines,
That gallant cavalier,
Who rode so gayly by thy side,
And whisper'd thee so near !
Were there no bonny dames at home,
Or no true lovers here,
That he should cross the seas to win
The dearest of the dear ?

I saw thee, lovely Ines,
Descend along the shore,
With bands of noble gentlemen,
And banners waved before ;
And gentle youth and maidens gay,
And snowy plumes they wore ;
It would have been a beauteous dream,
—If it had been no more !

Alas, alas, fair Ines !
She went away with song,
With Music waiting on her steps,
And shoutings of the throng ;
But some were sad and felt no mirth,
But only Music's wrong,
In sounds that sang Farewell, Farewell,
To her you 've loved so long.

Farewell, farewell, fair Ines,
That vessel never bore
So fair a lady on its deck,
Nor danced so light before.

Alas for pleasure on the sea,
And sorrow on the shore!
The smile that blessed one lover's heart
Has broken many more.

"The Haunted House," by the same author, is one of the truest poems ever written—one of the *truest*—one of the most unexceptionable—one of the most thoroughly artistic, both in its theme and in its execution. It is, moreover, powerfully ideal—imaginative. I regret that its length renders it unsuitable for the purposes of this Lecture. In place of it, permit me to offer the universally appreciated "Bridge of Sighs."

One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly importunate,
Gone to her death!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Look at her garments
Clinging like cerements;
Whilst the wave constantly
Drips from her clothing;
Take her up instantly,
Loving, not loathing.—

Touch her not scornfully;
Think of her mournfully,
Gently and humanly;
Not of the stains of her,
All that remains of her
Now, is pure womanly.

Make no deep scrutiny
Into her mutiny
Rash and undutiful:
Past all dishonor,
Death has left on her
Only the beautiful.

Still, for all slips of hers,
One of Eve's family—
Wipe those poor lips of hers
Oozing so clammily,

Loop up her tresses
Escaped from the comb,
Her fair auburn tresses;
Whilst wonderment guesses
Where was her home?

Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?
Or was there a dearer one
Still, and a nearer one
Yet, than all other?

Alas! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun!
Oh, it was pitiful!
Near a whole city full,
Home she had none.

Sisterly, brotherly,
Fatherly, motherly
Feelings had changed:
Love, by harsh evidence
Thrown from its eminence;
Even God's providence
Seeming estranged.

Where the lamps quiver
So far in the river,
With many a light
From window and casement,
From garret to basement,
She stood, with amazement,
Houseless by night.

The bleak wind of March
Made her tremble and shiver;
But not the dark arch,
Or the black flowing river:
Mad from life's history,
Glad to death's mystery,
Swift to be hurl'd—
Anywhere, anywhere
Out of the world!

In she plunged boldly,
No matter how coldly
The rough river ran,—
Over the brink of it,
Picture it—think of it,
Dissolute man!
Lave in it, drink of it
Then, if you can!

Take her up tenderly,
Lift her with care;
Fashion'd so slenderly,
Young, and so fair!

Ere her limbs frigidly
Stiffen too rigidly,
Decently,—kindly,—
Smooth, and compose them;
And her eyes, close them,
Staring so blindly!

Dreadfully staring
Through muddy impurity,
As when with the daring
Last look of despairing
Fixed on futurity.

Perishing gloomily,
Spurred by contumely,
Cold inhumanity,
Burning insanity,
Into her rest.—
Cross her hands humbly,
As if praying dumbly,
Over her breast!

Owning her weakness,
Her evil behavior,
And leaving, with meekness,
Her sins to her Saviour!

The vigor of this poem is no less remarkable than its pathos. The versification, although carrying the fanciful to the very verge of the fantastic, is nevertheless admirably adapted to the wild insanity which is the thesis of the poem.

Among the minor poems of Lord Byron, is one which has never received from the critics the praise which it undoubtedly deserves:

Though the day of my destiny 's over,
  And the star of my fate hath declined,
Thy soft heart refused to discover
  The faults which so many could find;
Though thy soul with my grief was acquainted
  It shrunk not to share it with me,
And the love which my spirit hath painted
  It never hath found but in *thee*.

Then when nature around me is smiling,
The last smile which answers to mine,
I do not believe it beguiling,
Because it reminds me of thine;
And when winds are at war with the ocean,
As the breasts I believed in with me,
If their billows excite an emotion,
It is that they bear me from *thee*.

Though the rock of my last hope is shivered,
And its fragments are sunk in the wave,
Though I feel that my soul is delivered
To pain—it shall not be its slave.
There is many a pang to pursue me;
They may crush, but they shall not contemn;
They may torture, but shall not subdue me;
'T is of *thee* that I think—not of them.

Though human, thou didst not deceive me;
Though woman, though didst not forsake;
Though loved, thou foreborest to grieve me;
Though slandered, thou never couldst shake;
Though trusted, thou didst not disclaim me;
Though parted, it was not to fly;
Though watchful, 't was not to defame me;
Nor mute, that the world might belie.

Yet I blame not the world, nor despise it,
Nor the war of the many with one—
If my soul was not fitted to prize it,
'T was folly not sooner to shun:
And if dearly that error hath cost me,
And more than I once could foresee,
I have found that whatever it lost me,
It could not deprive me of *thee*.

From the wreck of the past, which hath perished,
Thus much I at least may recall:
It hath taught me that which I most cherished
Deserved to be dearest of all.

In the desert a fountain is springing,
In the wide waste there still is a tree,
And a bird in the solitude singing,
Which speaks to my spirit of *thee.*

Although the rhythm here is one of the most difficult, the versification could scarcely be improved. No nobler *theme* ever engaged the pen of poet. It is the soul-elevating idea, that no man can consider himself entitled to complain of Fate while, in his adversity, he still retains the unwavering love of woman.

From Alfred Tennyson—although in perfect sincerity I regard him as the noblest poet that ever lived—I have left myself time to cite only a very brief specimen. I call him, and *think* him the noblest of poets—*not* because the impressions he produces are, at *all* times, the most profound—*not* because the poetical excitement which he induces is, at *all* times, the most intense—but because it *is*, at all times, the most ethereal—in other words, the most elevating and the most pure. No poet is so little of the earth, earthy. What I am about to read is from his last long poem, "The Princess":

Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awaken'd birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

Thus, although in a very cursory and imperfect manner, I have endeavored to convey to you my conception of the Poetic Principle. It has been my purpose to suggest that, while this Principle itself is, strictly and simply, the Human Aspiration for Supernal Beauty, the manifestation of the Principle is always found in *an elevating excitement of the Soul*—quite independent of that passion which is the intoxication of the Heart—or of that Truth which is the satisfaction of the Reason. For, in regard to Passion, alas! its tendency is to degrade rather than elevate the Soul. Love, on the contrary—Love—the true, the divine Eros—the Uranian, as distinguished from the Dionæan Venus—is unquestionably the purest and truest of all poetical themes. And in regard to Truth—if, to be sure, through the attainment of a truth, we are led to perceive a harmony where none was apparent before, we experience, at once, the true poetical effect—but this effect is referable to the harmony alone, and not in the least degree

to the truth which merely served to render the harmony manifest.

We shall reach, however, more immediately a distinct conception of what the true Poetry is, by mere reference to a few of the simple elements which induce in the Poet himself the true poetical effect. He recognizes the ambrosia which nourishes his soul, in the bright orbs that shine in Heaven—in the volutes of the flower—in the clustering of low shrubberies—in the waving of the grain-fields—in the slanting of the tall, Eastern trees—in the blue distance of mountains—in the grouping of clouds—in the twinkling of half-hidden brooks—in the gleaming of silver rivers—in the repose of sequestered lakes—in the star-mirroring depths of lonely wells. He perceives it in the songs of birds—in the harp of Æolus—in the sighing of the night-wind—in the repining voice of the forest—in the surf that complains to the shore—in the fresh breath of the woods—in the scent of the violet—in the voluptuous perfume of the hyacinth—in the suggestive odor that comes to him, at eventide, from far-distant, undiscovered islands, over dim oceans, illimitable and unexplored. He owns it in all noble thoughts—in all unworldly motives—in all holy impulses—in all chivalrous, generous, and self-sacrificing deeds. He feels it in the beauty of woman—in the grace of her step—in the lustre of her eye—in the melody of her voice—in her soft laughter—in her sigh—in the harmony of the rustling of her robes. He deeply feels it in

her winning endearments—in her burning enthusiasms—in her gentle charities—in her meek and devotional endurances—but above all—ah! far above all—he kneels to it—he worships it in the faith, in the purity, in the strength, in the altogether divine majesty—of her *love*.

Let me conclude by the recitation of yet another brief poem—one very different in character from any that I have before quoted. It is by Motherwell, and is called "The Song of the Cavalier." With our modern and altogether rational ideas of the absurdity and impiety of warfare, we are not precisely in that frame of mind best adapted to sympathize with the sentiments, and thus to appreciate the real excellence, of the poem. To do this fully, we must identify ourselves, in fancy, with the soul of the old cavalier.

Then mounte! then mounte, brave gallants, all,
And don your helmes amaine:
Deathe's couriers, Fame and Honor, call
Us to the field againe.

No shrewish teares shall fill our eye
When the sword-hilt 's in our hand,—
Heart-whole we 'll part and no whit sighe
For the fayrest of the land;
Let piping swaine, and craven wight,
Thus weepe and puling crye,
Our business is like men to fight,
And hero-like to die!

THE RATIONALE OF VERSE.

THE word "Verse" is here used not in its strict or primitive sense, but as the term most convenient for expressing generally and without pedantry all that is involved in the consideration of rhythm, rhyme, metre, and versification.

There is, perhaps, no topic in polite literature which has been more pertinaciously discussed, and there is certainly not one about which so much inaccuracy, confusion, misconception, misrepresentation, mystification, and downright ignorance on all sides, can be fairly said to exist. Were the topic really difficult, or did it lie, even, in the cloud-land of metaphysics, where the doubt-vapors may be made to assume any and every shape at the will or at the fancy of the gazer, we should have less reason to wonder at all this contradiction and perplexity; but in fact the subject is exceedingly simple; one tenth of it, possibly, may be called ethical; nine tenths, however, appertain to mathematics; and the whole is included within the limits of the commonest common-sense.

"But, if this is the case, how," it will be asked, "can so much misunderstanding have arisen? Is it conceivable

that a thousand profound scholars, investigating so very simple a matter for centuries, have not been able to place it in the fullest light, at least, of which it is susceptible?" These queries, I confess, are not easily answered:—at all events, a satisfactory reply to them might cost more trouble, than would, if properly considered, the whole *vexata quæstio* to which they have reference. Nevertheless, there is little difficulty or danger in suggesting that the "thousand profound scholars" *may* have failed, first, because they were scholars, secondly, because they were profound, and thirdly, because they were a thousand—the impotency of the scholarship and profundity having been thus multiplied a thousand-fold. I am serious in these suggestions; for, first again, there is something in "scholarship" which seduces us into blind worship of Bacon's Idol of the Theatre—into irrational deference to antiquity; secondly, the proper "profundity" is rarely profound—it is the nature of truth in general, as of some ores in particular, to be richest when most superficial; thirdly, the clearest subject may be overclouded by mere superabundance of talk. In chemistry, the best way of separating two bodies is to add a third; in speculation, fact often agrees with fact and argument with argument, until an additional well-meaning fact or argument sets every thing by the ears. In one case out of a hundred a point is excessively discussed because it is obscure; in the ninety-nine remaining it is obscure because excessively discussed. When a topic is thus circumstanced, the

readiest mode of investigating it is to forget that any previous investigation has been attempted.

But, in fact, while much has been written on the Greek and Latin rhythms, and even on the Hebrew, little effort has been made at examining that of any of the modern tongues. As regards the English, comparatively nothing has been done. It may be said, indeed, that we are without a treatise on our own verse. In our ordinary grammars and in our works on rhetoric or prosody in general, may be found occasional chapters, it is true, which have the heading "Versification," but these are, in all instances, exceedingly meagre. They pretend to no analysis; they propose nothing like system; they make no attempt at even rule; every thing depends upon "authority." They are confined, in fact, to mere exemplification of the supposed varieties of English feet and English lines;—although in no work with which I am acquainted are these feet correctly given or these lines detailed in any thing like their full extent. Yet what has been mentioned is all—if we except the occasional introduction of some pedagogue-ism, such as this, borrowed from the Greek Prosodies: "When a syllable is wanting, the verse is said to be catalectic; when the measure is exact, the line is acatalectic; when there is a redundant syllable it forms hypermeter." Now whether a line be termed catalectic or acatalectic is, perhaps, a point of no vital importance; it is even possible that the student may be able to decide, promptly, when the *a* should be employed and when

omitted, yet be incognizant, at the same time, of *all* that is worth knowing in regard to the structure of verse.

A leading defect in each of our treatises (if treatises they can be called), is the confining the subject to mere *Versification*, while *Verse* in general, with the understanding given to the term in the heading of this paper, is the real question at issue. Nor am I aware of even one of our grammars which so much as properly defines the word versification itself. "Versification," says a work now before me, of which the accuracy is far more than usual—the "English Grammar" of Goold Brown,—"Versification is the art of arranging words into lines of correspondent length, so as to produce harmony by the regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity." The commencement of this definition might apply, indeed, to the *art* of versification, but not versification itself. Versification is not the art of arranging, etc., but the actual arranging—a distinction too obvious to need comment. The error here is identical with one which has been too long permitted to disgrace the initial page of every one of our school grammars. I allude to the definitions of English grammar itself. "English grammar," it is said, "is the art of speaking and writing the English language correctly." This phraseology, or something essentially similar, is employed, I believe, by Bacon, Miller, Fisk, Greenleaf, Ingersoll, Kirkland, Cooper, Flint, Pue, Comly, and many others. These gentlemen, it is presumed, adopted it without examination from Murray, who derived

it from Lily (whose work was "*quam solam Regia Majestas in omnibus scholis docendam præcipit*"), and who appropriated it without acknowledgment, but with some unimportant modification, from the Latin Grammar of Leonicenus. It may be shown, however, that this definition, so complacently received, is not, and cannot be, a proper definition of English grammar. A definition is that which so describes its object as to distinguish it from all others; it is no definition of any one thing if its terms are applicable to any one other. But if it be asked: "What is the design—the end—the aim of English grammar?" our obvious answer is: "The art of speaking and writing the English language correctly,"—that is to say, we must use the precise words employed as the definition of English grammar itself. But the object to be attained by any means is, assuredly, not the means. English grammar and the end contemplated by English grammar are two matters sufficiently distinct; nor can the one be more reasonably regarded as the other than a fishing-hook as a fish. The definition, therefore, which is applicable in the latter instance, *cannot*, in the former, be true. grammar in general is the analysis of language; English grammar of the English.

But to return to Versification as defined in our extract above. "It is the art," says the extract, "of arranging words into lines *of correspondent length*." Not so; a correspondence in the length of lines is by no means essential. Pindaric odes are, surely, instances of versification, yet

these compositions are noted for extreme diversity in the length of their lines.

The arrangement is, moreover, said to be for the purpose of producing "*harmony* by the regular alternation," etc. But *harmony* is not the sole aim—not even the principal one. In the construction of verse, *melody* should never be left out of view; yet this is a point which all our prosodies have most unaccountably forborne to touch. Reasoned rules on this topic should form a portion of all systems of rhythm.

"So as to produce harmony," says the definition, "by the *regular alternation*," etc. A *regular* alternation, as described, forms no part of any principle of versification. The arrangement of spondees and dactyls, for example, in the Greek hexameter, is an arrangement which may be termed *at random*. At least it is arbitrary. Without interference with the line as a whole, a dactyl may be substituted for a spondee, or the converse, at any point other than the ultimate and penultimate feet, of which the former is always a spondee, the latter nearly always a dactyl. Here, it is clear, we have no "*regular* alternation of syllables differing in quantity."

"So as to produce harmony," proceeds the definition, "by the regular alternation of *syllables differing in quantity*,"—in other words, by the alternation of long and short syllables; for in rhythm all syllables are necessarily either short or long. But not only do I deny the necessity of any *regularity* in the succession of feet and, by con-

sequence, of syllables, but dispute the essentiality of any *alternation*, regular or irregular, of syllables long and short. Our author, observe, is now engaged in a definition of versification in general, not of English versification in particular. But the Greek and Latin metres abound in the spondee and pyrrhic—the former consisting of two long syllables, the latter of two short; and there are innumerable instances of the immediate succession of many spondees and many pyrrhics.

Here is a passage from Silius Italicus:

> Fallis te mensas inter quod credis inermem
> Tot bellis quæsita viro, tot cædibus armat
> Majestas eterna ducem: si admoveris ora
> Cannas et Trebium ante oculos Trasymenaque busta,
> Et Pauli stare ingentem miraberis umbram.

Making the elisions demanded by the classic prosodies, we should scan these hexameters thus:

> Fāllīs | tē mēn | sās īn | tēr qūod | crēdĭs ĭn | ērmēm |
> Tōt bēl | līs qūæ | sītă vĭ | rō tōt | cædĭbŭs | ārmāt |
> Mājēs | tās ē | tērnă dŭ | cēm s'ād | mōvĕrĭs | ōrā |
> Cānnās | ēt Trĕbĭ' | ānt'ŏcŭ | lōs Trăsy | mēnăqŭe | būstā |
> Ēt Pāu | lī stā | r'īngēn | tēm mī | rābĕrĭs | ūmbrām |

It will be seen that, in the first and last of these lines, we have only two short syllables in thirteen, with an uninterrupted succession of no less than *nine* long syllables. But how are we to reconcile all this with a definition of versification which describes it as "the art of arranging words into lines of correspondent length so as to produce

harmony by the *regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity?*"

It may be urged, however, that our prosodist's *intention* was to speak of the English metres alone, and that, by omitting all mention of the spondee and pyrrhic, he has virtually avowed their exclusion from our rhythms. A grammarian is never excusable on the ground of good intentions. We demand from him, if from any one, rigorous precision of style. But grant the design. Let us admit that our author, following the example of all authors on English Prosody, has, in defining versification at large, intended a definition merely of the English. All these prosodists, we will say, reject the spondee and pyrrhic. Still all admit the iambus, which consists of a short syllable followed by a long; the trochee, which is the converse of the iambus; the dactyl, formed of one long syllable followed by two short; and the anapæst—two short succeeded by a long. The spondee is improperly rejected, as I shall presently show. The pyrrhic is rightfully dismissed. Its existence in either ancient or moderm rhythm is purely chimerical, and the insisting on so perplexing a nonentity as a foot of *two short* syllables, affords, perhaps, the best evidence of the gross irrationality and subservience to authority which characterize our Prosody. In the meantime the acknowledged dactyl and anapæst are enough to sustain my proposition about the "alternation," etc., without reference to feet which are assumed to exist in the Greek and Latin metres alone:

for an anapæst and a dactyl may meet in the same line; when, of course, we shall have an uninterrupted succession of four short syllables. The meeting of these two feet, to be sure, is an accident not contemplated in the definition now discussed; for this definition, in demanding a "regular alternation of syllables differing in quantity," insists on a regular succession of similar *feet*. But here is an example:

Sīng tŏ mĕ | Isăbĕlle.

This is the opening line of a little ballad now before me, which proceeds in the same rhythm—a peculiarly beautiful one. More than all this: English lines are often well composed, entirely, of a regular succession of syllables *all of the same quantity*—the first lines, for instance, of the following quatrain by Arthur C. Coxe:

March! march! march!
Making sounds as they tread.
Ho! ho! how they step,
Going down to the dead!

The line italicised is formed of three cæsuras. The cæsura, of which I have much to say hereafter, is rejected by the English Prosodies and grossly misrepresented in the classic. It is a perfect foot—the most important in all verse—and consists of a single *long* syllable; *but the length of this syllable varies.*

It has thus been made evident that there is *not one* point of the definition in question which does not involve

an error. And for any thing more satisfactory or more intelligible we shall look in vain to any published treatise on the topic.

So general and so total a failure can be referred only to radical misconception. In fact the English Prosodists have blindly followed the pedants. These latter, like *les moutons de Panurge*, have been occupied in incessant tumbling into ditches, for the excellent reason that their leaders have so tumbled before. The Iliad, being taken as a starting-point, was made to stand in stead of Nature and common-sense. Upon this poem, in place of facts and deduction from fact, or from natural law, were built systems of feet, metres, rhythms, rules,—rules that contradict each other every five minutes, and for nearly all of which there may be found twice as many exceptions as examples. If any one has a fancy to be thoroughly confounded—to see how far the infatuation of what is termed "classical scholarship" can lead a book-worm in the manufacture of darkness out of sunshine, let him turn over, for a few moments, any of the German Greek prosodies. The only thing clearly made out in them is a very magnificent contempt for Liebnitz' principle of "a sufficient reason."

To divert attention from the real matter in hand by any farther reference to these works, is unnecessary, and would be weak. I cannot call to mind, at this moment, one essential particular of information that is to be gleaned from them; and I will drop them here with

merely this one observation : that, employing from among the numerous "*ancient*" feet the spondee, the trochee, the iambus, the anapæst, the dactyl, and the cæsura alone, I will engage to scan *correctly* any of the Horatian rhythms, or any true rhythm that human ingenuity can conceive. And this excess of chimerical feet is, perhaps, the very least of the scholastic supererogations. *Ex uno disce omnia.* The fact is that *Quantity* is a point in whose investigation the lumber of mere learning may be dispensed with, if ever in any. Its appreciation is universal. It appertains to no region, nor race, nor era in especial. To melody and to harmony the Greeks hearkened with ears precisely similar to those which we employ for similar purposes at present; and I should not be condemned for heresy in asserting that a pendulum at Athens would have vibrated much after the same fashion as does a pendulum in the city of Penn.

Verse originates in the human enjoyment of equality, fitness. To this enjoyment, also, all the moods of verse —rhythm, metre, stanza, rhyme, alliteration, the *refrain*, and other analogous effects—are to be referred. As there are some readers who habitually confound rhythm and metre, it may be as well here to say that the former concerns the *character* of feet (that is, the arrangements of syllables) while the latter has to do with the *number* of these feet. Thus, by "a dactylic *rhythm*" we express a sequence of dactyls. By "a dactylic hexa*meter*" we imply a line or measure consisting of six of these dactyls.

To return to *equality*. Its idea embraces those of similarity, proportion, identity, repetition, and adaptation or fitness. It might not be very difficult to go even behind the idea of equality, and show both how and why it is that the human nature takes pleasure in it, but such an investigation would, for any purpose now in view, be supererogatory. It is sufficient that the *fact* is undeniable—the fact that man derives enjoyment from his perception of equality. Let us examine a crystal. We are at once interested by the equality between the sides and between the angles of one of its faces: the equality of the sides pleases us; that of the angles doubles the pleasure. On bringing to view a second face in all respects similar to the first, this pleasure seems to be squared; on bringing to view a third, it appears to be cubed, and so on. I have no doubt, indeed, that the delight experienced, if measurable, would be found to have exact mathematical relations such as I suggest; that is to say, as far as a certain point, beyond which there would be a decrease in similar relations.

The perception of pleasure in the equality of *sounds* is the principle of *Music*. Unpractised ears can appreciate only simple equalities, such as are found in ballad airs. While comparing one simple sound with another they are too much occupied to be capable of comparing the equality subsisting between these two simple sounds, taken conjointly, and two other similar simple sounds taken conjointly. Practised ears, on the other hand, ap-

preciate both equalities at the same instant—although it is absurd to suppose that both are *heard* at the same instant. One is heard and appreciated from itself: the other is heard by the memory; and the instant glides into and is confounded with the secondary, appreciation. Highly cultivated musical taste in this manner enjoys not only these double equalities, all appreciated at once, but takes pleasurable cognizance, through memory, of equalities the members of which occur at intervals so great that the uncultivated taste loses them altogether. That this latter can properly estimate or decide on the merits of what is called scientific music, is of course impossible. But scientific music has no claim to intrinsic excellence—it is fit for scientific ears alone. In its excess it is the triumph of the *physique* over the *morale* of music. The sentiment is overwhelmed by the sense. On the whole, the advocates of the simpler melody and harmony have infinitely the best of the argument; although there has been very little of real argument on the subject.

In *verse*, which cannot be better designated than as an inferior or less capable Music, there is, happily, little chance for perplexity. Its rigidly simple character not even Science—not even Pedantry can greatly pervert.

The rudiment of verse may, possibly, be found in the *spondee*. The very germ of a thought seeking satisfaction in equality of sound, would result in the construction of words of two syllables, equally accented. In corroboration of this idea we find that spondees most abound in the most

ancient tongues. The second step we can easily suppose to be the comparison, that is to say, the collocation, of two spondees—of two words composed each of a spondee. The third step would be the juxta-position of three of these words. By this time the perception of monotone would induce farther consideration: and thus arises what Leigh Hunt so flounders in discussing under the title of "The *Principle* of Variety in Uniformity." Of course there is no principle in the case—nor in maintaining it. The "Uniformity" is the principle; the "Variety" is but the principle's natural safeguard from self-destruction by excess of self. "Uniformity," besides, is the very worst word that could have been chosen for the expression of the *general* idea at which it aims.

The perception of monotone having given rise to an attempt at its relief, the first thought in this new direction would be that of collating two or more words formed each of two syllables differently accented (that is to say, short and long) but having the same order in each word,—in other terms, of collating two or more iambuses, or two or more trochees. And here let me pause to assert that more pitiable nonsense has been written on the topic of *long* and *short* syllables than on any other subject under the sun. In general, a syllable is long or short, just as it is difficult or easy of enunciation. The *natural* long syllables are those encumbered—the *natural* short syllables are those *un*encumbered, with consonants; all the rest is mere artificiality and jargon. The Latin prosodies have a rule

that "a vowel before two consonants is long." This rule is deduced from "authority"—that is, from the observation that vowels so circumstanced, in the ancient poems, are always in syllables long by the laws of scansion. The philosophy of the rule is untouched, and lies simply in the physical difficulty of giving voice to such syllables—of performing the lingual evolutions necessary for their utterance. Of course, it is not the *vowel* that is long, (although the rule says so) but the syllable of which the vowel is a part. It will be seen that the length of a syllable, depending on the facility or difficulty of its enunciation, must have great variation in various syllables; but for the purposes of verse we suppose a long syllable equal to two short ones:—and the natural deviation from this relativeness we correct in perusal. The more closely our long syllables approach this relation with our short ones, the better, *ceteris paribus*, will be our verse: but if the relation does not exist of itself, we force it by emphasis, which can, of course, make any syllable as long as desired;—or, by an effort we can pronounce with unnatural brevity a syllable that is naturally too long. *Accented* syllables are of course always long—but, where *un*encumbered with consonants, must be classed among the *unnaturally* long. Mere custom has declared that we shall accent them—that is to say, dwell upon them; but no inevitable lingual difficulty forces us to do so. In line, every long syllable must of its own accord occupy in its utterance, or must be *made* to occupy, precisely the time demanded for two short

ones. The only exception to this rule is found in the cæsura—of which more anon.

The success of the experiment with the trochees or iambuses (the one would have suggested the other) must have led to a trial of dactyls or anapæsts—natural dactyls or anapæsts—dactylic or anapæstic *words*. And now some degree of complexity has been attained. There is an appreciation, first, of the equality between the several dactyls, or anapæsts, and, secondly, of that between the long syllable and the two short conjointly. But here it may be said that step after step would have been taken, in continuation of this routine, until all the feet of the Greek prosodies became exhausted. Not so; these remaining feet have no existence except in the brains of the scholiasts. It is needless to imagine men inventing these things, and folly to explain how and why they invented them, until it shall be first shown that they are actually invented. All other "feet" than those which I have specified, are, if not impossible at first view, merely combinations of the specified; and, although this assertion is rigidly true, I will, to avoid misunderstanding, put it in a somewhat different shape. I will say, then, that at present I am aware of no *rhythm*—nor do I believe that any one can be constructed—which, in its last analysis, will not be found to consist altogether of the feet I have mentioned, either existing in their individual and obvious condition, or interwoven with each other in accordance with simple natural laws which I will endeavor to point out hereafter.

We have now gone so far as to suppose men constructing indefinite sequences of spondaic, iambic, trochaic, dactylic, or anapæstic words. In *extending* these sequences, they would be again arrested by the sense of monotone. A succession of spondees would *immediately* have displeased; one of iambuses or of trochees, on account of the variety included within the foot itself, would have taken longer to displease; one of dactyls or anapæsts, still longer; but even the last, if extended very far, must have become wearisome. The idea, first, of curtailing, and, secondly, of defining the length of, a sequence, would thus at once have arisen. Here then is the *line*, or verse proper.* The principle of equality being constantly at the bottom of the whole process, lines would naturally be made, in the first instance, equal in the number of their feet; in the second instance, there would be variation in the mere number: one line would be twice as long as another; then one would be some less obvious multiple of another; then still less obvious proportions would be adopted;—nevertheless there would be *proportion*, that is to say, a phase of equality, still.

Lines being once introduced, the necessity of distinctly defining these lines *to the ear*, (as yet written verse does not exist,) would lead to a scrutiny of their capabilities

* Verse, from the Latin *vertere*, to turn, is so called on account of the turning or re-commencement of the series of feet. Thus a verse, strictly speaking, is a line. In this sense, however, I have preferred using the latter word alone; employing the former in the general acceptation given it in the heading of this paper.

at their terminations:—and now would spring up the idea of equality in sound between the final syllables—in other words, of *rhyme*. First, it would be used only in the iambic, anapæstic, and spondaic rhythms (granting that the latter had not been thrown aside, long since, on account of its tameness), because in these rhythms, the concluding syllable being long, could best sustain the necessary protraction of the voice. No great while could elapse, however, before the effect, found pleasant as well as useful, would be applied to the two remaining rhythms. But as the chief force of rhyme must lie in the accented syllable, the attempt to create rhyme at all in these two remaining rhythms, the trochaic and dactylic, would necessarily result in double and triple rhymes, such as *beauty* with *duty* (trochaic) and *beautiful* with *dutiful* (dactylic).

It must be observed, that in suggesting these processes, I assign them no date; nor do I even insist upon their order. Rhyme is supposed to be of modern origin, and were this proved, my positions remain untouched. I may say, however, in passing, that several instances of rhyme occur in the "Clouds" of Aristophanes, and that the Roman poets occasionally employ it. There is an effective species of ancient rhyming which has never descended to the moderns: that in which the ultimate and penultimate syllables rhyme with each other. For example:

Parturiunt montes et nascitur ridicu*lus mus*.

And again:

Litoreis ingens inventa sub ilici*bus sus*.

The terminations of Hebrew verse (as far as understood) show no signs of rhyme; but what thinking person can doubt that it did actually exist? That men have so obstinately and blindly insisted, *in general*, even up to the present day, in confining rhyme to the *ends* of lines, when its effect is even better applicable elsewhere, intimates, in my opinion, the sense of some *necessity* in the connection of the end with the rhyme,—hints that the origin of rhyme lay in a necessity which connected it with the end,—shows that neither mere accident nor mere fancy gave rise to the connection,—points, in a word, at the very necessity which I have suggested (that of some mode of defining lines *to the ear*) as the true origin of rhyme. Admit this, and we throw the origin far back in the night of Time—beyond the origin of written verse.

But, to resume. The amount of complexity I have now supposed to be attained is very considerable. Various systems of equalization are appreciated at once (or nearly so) in their respective values and in the value of each system with reference to all the others. As our present *ultimatum* of complexity, we have arrived at triple-rhymed, natural-dactylic lines, existing proportionally as well as equally with regard to other triple-rhymed, natural-dactylic lines. For example:

Virginal Lilian, rigidly, humblily dutiful;
Saintlily, lowlily,
Thrillingly, holily
Beautiful!

Here we appreciate, first, the absolute equality between the long syllable of each dactyl and the two short conjointly; secondly, the absolute equality between each dactyl and any other dactyl—in other words, among all the dactyls; thirdly, the absolute equality between the two middle lines; fourthly, the absolute equality between the first line and the three others taken conjointly; fifthly, the absolute equality between the last two syllables of the respective words "dutiful" and "beautiful"; sixthly, the absolute equality between the two last syllables of the respective words "lowlily" and "holily"; seventhly, the proximate equality between the first syllable of "dutiful" and the first syllable of "beautiful"; eighthly, the proximate equality between the first syllable of "lowlily" and that of "holily"; ninthly, the proportional equality (that of five to one) between the first line and each of its members, the dactyls; tenthly, the proportional equality (that of two to one,) between each of the middle lines and its members, the dactyls; eleventhly, the proportional equality between the first line and each of the two middle—that of five to two; twelfthly, the proportional equality between the first line and the last—that of five to one; thirteenthly, the proportional equality between each of the middle lines and the last—that of two to one; lastly, the proportional equality, as concerns number, between all the lines, taken collectively and any individual line—that of four to one.

The consideration of this last equality would give birth

immediately to the idea of *stanza**—that is to say, the insulation of lines into equal or obviously proportional masses. In its primitive (which was also its best) form, the stanza would most probably have had absolute unity. In other words, the removal of any one of its lines would have rendered it imperfect; as in the case above, where, if the last line, for example, be taken away, there is left no rhyme to the "dutiful" of the first. Modern stanza is excessively loose—and where so, ineffective, as a matter of course.

Now, although in the deliberate written statement which I have here given of these various systems of equalities, there seems to be an infinity of complexity—so much that it is hard to conceive the mind taking cognizance of them all in the brief period occupied by the perusal or recital of the stanza—yet the difficulty is in fact apparent only when we will it to become so. Any one fond of mental experiment may satisfy himself, by trial, that, in listening to the lines, he does actually (although with a seeming unconsciousness, on account of the rapid evolutions of sensation) recognize and instantaneously appreciate (more or less intensely as his ear is cultivated) each and all of the equalizations detailed. The pleasure received, or receivable, has very much such progressive increase, and in very nearly such mathematical relations, as those which I have suggested in the case of the crystal.

* A stanza is often vulgarly, and with gross impropriety, called a *verse*.

It will be observed that I speak of merely a proximate equality between the first syllable of "dutiful" and that of "beautiful"; and it may be asked why we cannot imagine the earliest rhymes to have had absolute instead of proximate equality of sound. But absolute equality would have involved the use of identical words; and it is the duplicate sameness or monotony—that of sense as well as that of sound—which would have caused these rhymes to be rejected in the very first instance.

The narrowness of the limits within which verse composed of natural feet alone must necessarily have been confined, would have led, after a *very* brief interval, to the trial and immediate adoption of artificial feet—that is to say, of feet *not* constituted each of a single word, but two or even three words; or of parts of words. These feet would be intermingled with natural ones. For example:

ă brēath | căn māke | thĕm ās | ă brēath | hăs māde.

This is an iambic line in which each iambus is formed of two words. Again:

Thĕ ūn | ĭmā | gĭnā | blĕ mīght | ŏf Jōve.

This is an iambic line in which the first foot is formed of a word and a part of a word; the second and third, of parts taken from the body or interior of a word; the fourth, of a part and a whole; the fifth, of two complete words. There are no *natural* feet in either lines. Again:

Cān ĭt bĕ | fānciĕd thăt | Dēĭty | ēvĕr vĭn | dīctĭvely
Māde ĭn hĭs | īmăge ă | mānnĭkĭn | mērely tŏ | mādděn ĭt?

These are two dactylic lines in which we find natural feet ("Deity," "mannikin"), feet composed of two words ("fancied that," "image a," "merely to," "madden it"), feet composed of three words ("can it be," "made in his"), a foot composed of a part of a word ("dictively"), and a foot composed of a word and a part of a word ("ever vin").

And now, in our supposititious progress, we have gone so far as to exhaust all the *essentialities* of verse. What follows may, strictly speaking, be regarded as embellishment merely—but even in this embellishment, the rudimental sense of *equality* would have been the never-ceasing impulse. It would, for example, be simply in seeking farther administration to this sense that men would come, in time, to think of the *refrain*, or burden, where, at the closes of the several stanzas of a poem, one word or phrase is *repeated;* and of alliteration, in whose simplest form a consonant is *repeated* in the commencements of various words. This effect would be extended so as to embrace repetitions both of vowels and of consonants, in the bodies as well as in the beginnings of words; and, at a later period would be made to infringe on the province of rhyme, by the introduction of general similarity of sound between whole feet occurring in the body of a line: —all of which modifications I have exemplified in the line above,

*M*ade in his i*m*age a *mannikin m*erely to *madden it.*

Farther cultivation would improve also the *refrain* by

relieving its monotone in slightly varying the phrase at each repetition, or (as I have attempted to do in "The Raven") in retaining the phrase and varying its application—although this latter point is not strictly a rhythmical effect *alone*. Finally, poets when fairly wearied with following precedent—following it the more closely the less they perceived it in company with Reason—would adventure so far as to indulge in positive rhyme at other points than the ends of lines. First, they would put it in the middle of the line; then at some point where the multiple would be less obvious; then, alarmed at their own audacity, they would undo all their work by cutting these lines in two. And here is the fruitful source of the infinity of "short metre," by which modern poetry, if not distinguished, is at least disgraced. It would require a high degree, indeed, both of cultivation and of courage, on the part of any versifier, to enable him to place his rhymes—and let them remain—at unquestionably their best position, that of unusual and *unanticipated* intervals.

On account of the stupidity of some people, or (if talent be a more respectable word), on account of their talent for misconception—I think it necessary to add here, first, that I believe the "processes" above detailed to be nearly if not accurately those which *did* occur in the gradual creation of what we now call verse; secondly, that, although I so believe, I yet urge neither the assumed fact nor my belief in it as a part of the true propositions of this paper; thirdly, that in regard to the aim of this paper, it is of no

consequence whether these processes did occur either in the order I have assigned them, or at all; my design being simply, in presenting a general type of what such processes *might* have been and *must* have resembled, to help *them*, the "some people," to an easy understanding of what I have farther to say on the topic of Verse.

There is one point which, in my summary of the processes, I have purposely forborne to touch; because this point, being the most important of all, on account of the immensity of error usually involved in its consideration, would have led me into a series of detail inconsistent with the object of a summary.

Every reader of verse must have observed how seldom it happens that even any one line proceeds uniformly with a succession, such as I have supposed, of absolutely equal feet; that is to say, with a succession of iambuses only, or of trochees only, or of dactyls only, or of anapæsts only, or of spondees only. Even in the most musical lines we find the succession interrupted. The iambic pentameters of Pope, for example, will be found, on examination, frequently varied by trochees in the beginning, or by (what seem to be) anapæsts in the body, of the line.

> Ŏh thoū | whătē | vĕr tī | tlĕ plēase | thĭne ēar |
> Dĕan Drā | pĭĕr Bīck | ĕrstāff | ŏr Gūl | ĭvēr |
> Whēthĕr | thŏu choōse | Cĕrvān | tĕs' sē | rĭoŭs aīr |
> Ŏr laūgh | ănd shāke | ĭn Rāb | ĕlăis' ēa | sy chāir. |

Were any one weak enough to refer to the prosodies for the solution of the difficulty here, he would find it *solved*

as usual by a *rule*, stating the fact (or what it, the rule, supposes to be the fact), but without the slightest attempt at the *rationale*. "By a *synæresis* of the two short syllables," say the books, "an anapæst may sometimes be employed for an iambus, or a dactyl for a trochee. * * * In the beginning of a line a trochee is often used for an iambus."

Blending is the plain English for *synæresis*—but there should be *no* blending; neither is an anapæst *ever* employed for an iambus, or a dactyl for a trochee. These feet differ in time; and *no* feet so differing can ever be legitimately used in the same line. An anapæst is equal to four short syllables—an iambus only to three. Dactyls and trochees hold the same relation. The principle of *equality*, in verse, admits, it is true, of variation at certain points, for the relief of monotone, as I have already shown, but the point of *time* is that point which, being the rudimental one, must never be tampered with at all.

To explain:—In farther efforts for the relief of monotone than those to which I have alluded in the summary, men soon came to see that there was no absolute necessity for adhering to the precise number of syllables, provided the time required for the whole foot was preserved inviolate. They saw, for instance, that in such a line as

ŏr laŭgh | ănd shāke | ĭn Rāb | ĕlăis' ēa | sy chāir, |

the equalization of the three syllables *elais' ea* with the two syllables composing any of the other feet, could be readily

effected by pronouncing the two syllables *elais'* in double quick time. By pronouncing each of the syllables *e* and *lais'* twice as rapidly as the syllable *sy*, or the syllable *in*, or any other syllable, they could bring the two of them, taken together, to the length, that is to say, to the time, of any one short syllable. This consideration enabled them to affect the agreeable variation of three syllables in place of the uniform two. And variation was the object—variation to the ear. What sense is there, then, in supposing this object rendered null by the *blending* of the two syllables so as to render them, in absolute effect, one? Of course, there must be *no* blending. Each syllable must be pronounced as distinctly as possible (or the variation is lost), but with twice the rapidity in which the ordinary syllable is enunciated. That the syllables *elais' ea* do not compose an *anapæst* is evident, and the signs (ăăă) of their accentuation are erroneous. The foot might be written thus (āăă), the inverted crescents expressing double quick time; and might be called a bastard iambus.

Here is a trochaic line:

Sēe thĕ dēlĭcăte | fōotĕd | rēin-deĕr. |

The prosodies—that is to say, the most considerate of them—would here decide that "*delicate*" is a dactyl used in place of a trochee, and would refer to what they call their "rule," for justification. Others, varying the stupidity, would insist upon a Procrustean adjustment thus (del'cate)—an adjustment recommended to all such words

as *silvery*, *murmuring*, etc., which, it is said, should be not only pronounced, but written *silv'ry*, *murm'ring*, and so on, whenever they find themselves in trochaic predicament. I have only to say that "delicate," when circumstanced as above, is neither a dactyl nor a dactyl's equivalent; that I would suggest for it this (ăăă) accentuation; that I think it as well to call it a bastard trochee; and that all words, at all events, should be written and pronounced *in full*, and as nearly as possible as nature intended them.

About eleven years ago, there appeared in the *American Monthly Magazine* (then edited, I believe, by Messrs. Hoffman and Benjamin) a review of Mr. Willis' Poems; the critic putting forth his strength or his weakness, in an endeavor to show that the poet was either absurdly affected, or grossly ignorant of the laws of verse; the accusation being based altogether on the fact that Mr. W. made occasional use of this very word "delicate," and other similar words, in "the Heroic measure, which every one knew consisted of feet of two syllables." Mr. W. has often, for example, such lines as

> That binds him to a woman's *delicate* love—
> In the gay sunshine, *reverent* in the storm—
> With its *invisible* fingers my loose hair.

Here, of course, the feet *licate love*, *verent in*, and *sible fin*, are bastard iambuses; are *not* anapæsts; and are *not* improperly used. Their employment, on the contrary, by Mr. Willis, is but one of the innumerable instances he

has given of keen sensibility in all those matters of taste which may be classed under the general head of *fanciful embellishment.*

It is also about eleven years ago, if I am not mistaken, since Mr. Horne (of England), the author of "Orion," one of the noblest epics in any language, thought it necessary to preface his "Chaucer Modernized" by a very long and evidently a very elaborate essay, of which the greater portion was occupied in a discussion of the seemingly anomalous foot of which we have been speaking. Mr. Horne upholds Chaucer in its frequent use; maintains his superiority, *on account* of his so frequently using it, over all English versifiers; and, indignantly repelling the common idea of those who make verse on their fingers, that the superfluous syllable is a roughness and an error, very chivalrously makes battle for it as "a grace." That a grace it *is*, there can be no doubt; and what I complain of is, that the author of the most happily versified long poem in existence, should have been under the necessity of discussing this grace merely *as* a grace, through forty or fifty vague pages, solely because of his inability to show *how* and *why* it is a grace—by which showing the question would have been settled in an instant.

About the trochee used for an iambus, as we see in the beginning of the line,

Whĕthĕr thou choose Cervantes' serious air,

there is little that need be said. It brings me to the gen-

eral proposition that in all rhythms, the prevalent or distinctive feet may be varied at will, and nearly at random, by the *occasional* introduction of equivalent feet—that is to say, feet the sum of whose syllabic times is equal to the sum of the syllabic times of the distinctive feet. Thus the trochee *whēthĕr*, is equal in the sum of the times of its syllables, to the iambus, *thoŭ chōose*, in the sum of the times of *its* syllables; each foot being, in time, equal to three short syllables. Good versifiers, who happen to be, also, good poets, contrive to relieve the monotone of a series of feet, by the use of equivalent feet only at rare intervals, and at such points of their subject as seem in accordance with the *startling* character of the variation. Nothing of this care is seen in the line quoted above—although Pope has some fine instances of the duplicate effect. Where vehemence is to be strongly expressed, I am not sure that we should be wrong in venturing on *two consecutive* equivalent feet—although I cannot say that I have ever known the adventure made, except in the following passage, which occurs in "Al Aaraaf," a boyish poem, written by myself when a boy. I am referring to the sudden and rapid advent of a star:

> Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
> Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
> Whĕn fīrst thĕ phāntŏm's cōurse wăs foūnd tŏ bē
> *Hēadlŏng hīthĕr*ward o'er the starry sea.

In the "general proposition" above, I speak of the *occasional* introduction of equivalent feet. It sometimes

happens that unskilful versifiers, without knowing what they do, or why they do it, introduce so many "variations" as to exceed in number the "distinctive" feet; when the ear becomes at once balked by the *bouleversement* of the rhythm. Too many trochees, for example, inserted in an iambic rhythm, would convert the latter to a trochaic. I may note here, that, in all cases, the rhythm designed should be commenced and continued, *without* variation, until the ear has had full time to comprehend what *is* the rhythm. In violation of a rule so obviously founded in common-sense, many even of our best poets, do not scruple to begin an iambic rhythm with a trochee, or the converse; or a dactylic with an anapæst, or the converse; and so on.

A somewhat less objectionable error, although still a decided one, is that of commencing a rhythm, not with a different equivalent foot, but with a "bastard" foot of the rhythm intended. For example:

Māny ă | thōught wĭll | cōme tŏ | mēmŏry. |

Here *many a* is what I have explained to be a bastard trochee, and to be understood should be accented with inverted crescents. It is objectionable solely on account of its position as the *opening* foot of a trochaic rhythm. *Memory*, similarly accented, is also a bastard trochee, but *un*objectionable, although by no means demanded.

The farther illustration of this point will enable me to take an important step.

One of the finest poets, Mr. Christopher Pease Cranch, begins a very beautiful poem thus:

> Many are the thoughts that come to me
> In my lonely musing;
> And they drift so strange and swift
> There 's no time for choosing
> Which to follow; for to leave
> Any, seems a losing.

"A losing" to Mr. Cranch, of course—but this *en passant*. It will be seen here that the intention is trochaic, although we do *not* see this intention by the opening foot, as we should do—or even by the opening line. Reading the whole stanza, however, we perceive the trochaic rhythm as the general design, and so, after some reflection, we divide the first line thus:

> Many are the | thōughts thăt | cōme tŏ | mē. |

Thus scanned, the line will seem musical. It *is*—highly so. And it is because there is no end to instances of just such lines of apparently incomprehensible music, that Coleridge thought proper to invent his nonsensical *system* of what he calls "scanning by accents"—as if "scanning by accents" were any thing more than a phrase. Wherever "Christabel" is really *not rough*, it can be as readily scanned by the true *laws* (not the supposititious *rules*) of verse as can the simplest pentameter of Pope; and where it *is* rough (*passim*), these same laws will enable any one of common-sense to show *why* it is

rough, and to point out, instantaneously, the remedy for the roughness.

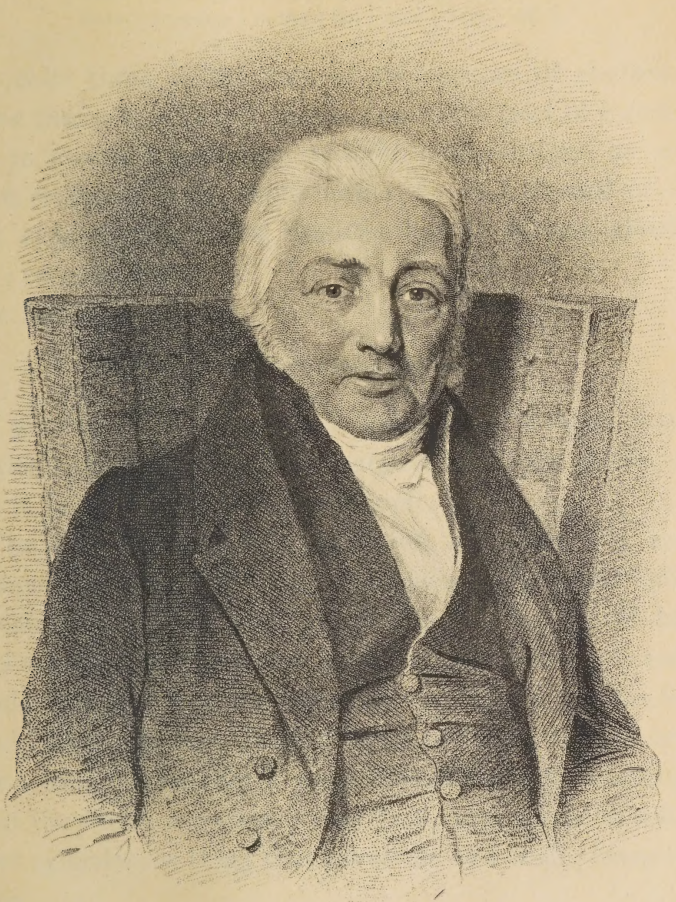
A reads and re-reads a certain line, and pronounces it false in rhythm—unmusical. *B*, however, reads it *to A*, and *A* is at once struck with the perfection of the rhythm, and wonders at his dulness in not "catching" it before. Henceforward he admits the line to be musical. *B*, triumphant, asserts that, to be sure, the line is musical—for it is the work of Coleridge,—and that it is *A* who is *not*; the fault being in *A's* false reading. Now here *A* is right and *B* wrong. *That* rhythm is erroneous (at some point or other more or less obvious) which *any* ordinary reader *can*, without design, read improperly. It is the business of the poet so to construct his line that the intention *must* be caught *at once*. Even when these men have precisely the same understanding of a sentence, they differ, and often widely, in their modes of enunciating it. Any one who has taken the trouble to examine the topic of emphasis (by which I here mean not *accent* of particular syllables, but the dwelling on entire words), must have seen that men emphasize in the most singularly arbitrary manner. There are certain large classes of people, for example, who persist in emphasizing their monosyllables. Little uniformity of emphasis prevails; because the thing itself—the idea, emphasis—is referable to no natural, at least to no well-comprehended and therefore uniform, law. Beyond a very narrow and vague limit, the whole matter is conventionality. And if we differ in emphasis even

when we agree in comprehension, how much more so in the former when in the latter too! Apart, however, from the consideration of natural disagreement, it is not clear that, by tripping here and mouthing there, any sequence of words may be twisted into any species of rhythm? But are we thence to deduce that all sequences of words are rhythmical in a rational understanding of the term?—for this is the deduction, precisely to which the *reductio ad absurdum* will, in the end, bring all the propositions of Coleridge. Out of a hundred readers of "Christabel," fifty will be able to make nothing of its rhythm, while forty-nine of the remaining fifty will, with some ado, fancy they comprehend it, after the fourth or fifth perusal. The one out of the whole hundred who shall both comprehend and admire it at first sight must be an unaccountably clever person—and I am by far too modest to assume, for a moment, that that very clever person is myself.

In illustration of what is here advanced I cannot do better than quote a poem:

> Pease porridge hot—pease porridge cold—
> Pease porridge in the pot—nine days old.

Now those of my readers who have never *heard* this poem pronounced according to the nursery conventionality, will find its rhythm as obscure as an explanatory note; while those who *have* heard it, will divide it thus, declare it musical, and wonder how there can be any doubt about it.



Pease | porridge | hot | pease | porridge | cold |
Pease | porridge | in the | pot | nine | days | old. |

The chief thing in the way of this species of rhythm, is the necessity which it imposes upon the poet of travelling in constant company with his compositions, so as to be ready, at a moment's notice, to avail himself of a well understood poetical license—that of reading aloud one's own doggerel.

In Mr. Cranch's line,

Many are the | thoughts that | come to | me, |

the general error of which I speak is, of course, very partially exemplified, and the purpose for which, chiefly, I cite it, lies yet farther on in our topic.

The two divisions (*thoughts that*) and (*come to*) are ordinary trochees. Of the last division (*me*) we will talk hereafter. The first division (many are the) would be thus accented by the Greek prosodies (mānу ărе thĕ) and would be called by them *αστρολογος*. The Latin books would style the foot *Pæon Primus*, and both Greek and Latin would swear that it was composed of a trochee and what they term a pyrrhic—that is to say, a foot of two *short* syllables—a thing that *cannot be*, as I shall presently show.

But now, there is an obvious difficulty. The *astrologos*, according to the prosodies' own showing, is equal to *five* short syllables, and the trochee to *three*—yet, in the line quoted, these two feet are equal. They occupy *precisely*

the same time. In fact, the whole music of the line depends upon their being *made* to occupy the same time. The prosodies then, have demonstrated what all mathematicians have stupidly failed in demonstrating—that three and five are one and the same thing.

After what I have already said, however, about the bastard trochee and the bastard iambus, no one can have any trouble in understanding that *many are the* is of similar character. It is merely a bolder variation than usual from the routine of trochees, and introduces to the bastard trochee one additional syllable. But this syllable is not *short*. That is, it is not short in the sense of "*short*" as applied to the final syllable of the ordinary trochee, where the word means merely *the half of long*.

In this case (that of the additional syllable), "short," if used at all, must be used in the sense of *the sixth of long*. And all the three final syllables can be called *short* only with the same understanding of the term. The three together are equal only to the one short syllable (whose place they supply) of the ordinary trochee. It follows that there is no sense in thus (˘) accenting these syllables. We must devise for them some new character which shall denote the sixth of long. Let it be (c)—the crescent placed with the curve to the left. The whole foot (māny ăre thĕ) might be called a *quick trochee*.

We come now to the final division (*me*) of Mr. Cranch's line. It is clear that this foot, short as it appears, is fully equal in time to each of the preceding. It is in fact the

cæsura—the foot which, in the beginning of this paper, I called the most important in all verse. Its chief office is that of pause or termination; and here—at the end of a line—its use is easy, because there is no danger of misapprehending its value. We pause on it, by a seeming necessity, just as long as it has taken us to pronounce the preceding feet, whether iambuses, trochees, dactyls, or anapæsts. It is thus a *variable foot*, and, with some care, may be well introduced into the body of a line, as in a little poem of great beauty by Mrs. Welby:

I have | a lit | tle step | son | of on | ly three | years old. |

Here we dwell on the cæsura, *son*, just as long as it requires us to pronounce either of the preceding or succeeding iambuses. Its value, therefore, in this line, is that of three short syllables. In the following dactylic line its value is that of four short syllables.

Pale as a | lily was | Emily | Gray.

I have accentuated the cæsura with a dotted line (·····) by way of expressing this variability of value.

I observed just now that there could be no such foot as one of two short syllables. What we start from in the very beginning of all idea on the topic of verse, is quantity, *length*. Thus when we enunciate an independent syllable it is long, as a matter of course. If we enunciate two, dwelling on both equally, we express equality in the enumeration, or length, and have a right to call them two

long syllables. If we dwell on one more than the other, we have also a right to call one short, because it is short in relation to the other. But if we dwell on both equally and with a tripping voice, saying to ourselves here are two short syllables, the query might well be asked of us—"in relation to what are they short?" Shortness is but the negation of length. To say, then, that two syllables, placed independently of any other syllable, are short, is merely to say that they have no positive length, or enunciation—in other words that they are no syllables—that they do not exist at all. And if, persisting, we add any thing about their equality, we are merely floundering in the idea of an identical equation, where, x being equal to x, nothing is shown to be equal to zero. In a word, we can form no conception of a pyrrhic as of an independent foot. It is a mere chimera bred in the mad fancy of a pedant.

From what I have said about the equalization of the several feet of a *line*, it must not be deduced that any *necessity* for equality in time exists between the rhythm of *several* lines. A poem, or even a stanza, may begin with iambuses, in the first line, and proceed with anapæsts in the second, or even with the less accordant dactyls, as in the opening of quite a pretty specimen of verse by Miss Mary A. S. Aldrich.

The wa | ter li | ly sleeps | in pride |
Dŏwn ĭn thĕ | dĕpths ŏf thĕ | āzūre | lāke. |

Here *azure* is a spondee, equivalent to a dactyl; *lake*, a cæsura.

I shall now best proceed in quoting the initial lines of Byron's "Bride of Abydos":

> Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle
> Are emblems of deeds that are done in their clime—
> Where the rage of the vulture, the love of the turtle
> Now melt into softness, now madden to crime?
> Know ye the land of the cedar and vine,
> Where the flowers ever blossom, the beams ever shine,
> And the light wings of Zephyr, oppressed with perfume,
> Wax faint o'er the gardens of Gul in their bloom?
> Where the citron and olive are fairest of fruit
> And the voice of the nightingale never is mute—
> Where the virgins are soft as the roses they twine,
> And all save the spirit of man is divine?
> 'T is the land of the East—'t is the clime of the Sun—
> Can he smile on such deeds as his children have done?
> Oh, wild as the accents of lovers' farewell
> Are the hearts that they bear and the tales that they tell!

Now the flow of these lines (as times go) is very sweet and musical. They have been often admired, and justly —as times go,—that is to say, it is a rare thing to find better versification of its kind. And where verse is pleasant to the ear, it is silly to find fault with it because it refuses to be scanned. Yet I have heard men, professing to be scholars, who made no scruple of abusing these lines of Byron's on the ground that they were musical in spite of *all law*. Other gentlemen, *not* scholars, abused "all law" for the same reason; and it occurred neither to the one party nor to the other that the law about which they were disputing might possibly be no law at all—an ass of a law in the skin of a lion.

The grammars said something about dactylic lines,

and it was easily seen that *these* lines were at least meant for dactylic. The first one was, therefore, thus divided:

Knōw yĕ thĕ | lānd whĕre thĕ | cyprĕss ănd | myrtlĕ. |

The concluding foot was a mystery; but the prosodies said something about the dactylic "measure" calling now and then for a double rhyme; and the court of inquiry were content to rest in the double rhyme, without exactly perceiving what a double rhyme had to do with the question of an irregular foot. Quitting the first line, the second was thus scanned:

Arē ĕmblĕms | ōf dĕeds thăt | āre dŏne ĭn | thēir clĭme. |

It was immediately seen, however, that *this* would not do,—it was at war with the whole emphasis of the reading. It could not be supposed that Byron, or any one in his senses, intended to place stress upon such monosyllables as "are," "of," and "their," nor could "their clime," collated with "to crime," in the corresponding line below, be fairly twisted into any thing like a "double rhyme," so as to bring every thing within the category of the grammars. But farther these grammars spoke not. The inquirers, therefore, in spite of their sense of harmony in the lines, when considered without reference to scansion, fell back upon the idea that the "Are" was a blunder,—an excess for which the poet should be sent to Coventry,—and, striking it out, they scanned the remainder of the line as follows:

—— ēmblĕms ŏf | dēeds thăt ăre | dōne ĭn thĕir | clīme. |

This answered pretty well; but the grammars admitted no such foot as a foot of one syllable; and besides the rhythm was dactylic. In despair, the books are well searched, however, and at last the investigators are gratified by a full solution of the riddle in the profound "Observation" quoted in the beginning of this article:—"When a syllable is wanting, the verse is said to be catalectic; when the measure is exact, the line is acatalectic; when there is a redundant syllable it forms hypermeter." This is enough. The anomalous line is pronounced to be catalectic at the head and to form hypermeter at the tail,—and so on, and so on; it being soon discovered that nearly all the remaining lines are in a similar predicament, and that what flows so smoothly to the ear, although so roughly to the eye, is, after all, a mere jumble of catalecticism, acatalecticism, and hypermeter—not to say worse.

Now, had this court of inquiry been in possession of even the shadow of the *philosophy* of Verse, they would have had no trouble in reconciling this oil and water of the eye and ear, by merely scanning the passage without reference to lines, and, continuously, thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle Are | emblems of | deeds that are | done in their | clime Where the | rage of the | vulture the | love of the | turtle Now | melt into | softness now | madden to | *crime* | Know ye the | land of the | cedar and | vine Where the | flowers ever | blossom the | beams ever | shine Where the | light wings of | Zephyr op | pressed by per | *fume Wax* | faint o'er the | gardens of | Gul in their | bloom Where the | citron and | olive are | fairest of | fruit And the | voice of the | nightingale | never is | mute Where the | virgins are | soft as the | roses they | *twine And* | all save the | spirit of | man is di |

vine 'T is the | land of the | East 't is the | clime of the | Sun Can he | smile on such | deeds as his | children have | *done Oh* | wild as the | accents of | lovers' fare | well Are the | hearts that they | bear and the | tales that they | *tell.*

Here "crime" and "tell" (italicized) are cæsuras, each having the value of a dactyl, four short syllables; while "*fume Wax*," "*twine And*," and "*done Oh*," are spondees, which, of course, being composed of two long syllables, are also equal to four short, and are the dactyl's natural equivalent. The nicety of Byron's ear has led him into a succession of feet which, with two trivial exceptions as regards melody, are absolutely accurate—a very rare occurrence this in dactylic or anapæstic rhythms. The exceptions are found in the spondee "*twine And*," and the dactyl, "*smile on such.*" Both feet are false in point of melody. In "*twine And*," to make out the rhythm, we must force "*And*" into a length which it will not naturally bear. We are called on to sacrifice either the proper length of the syllable as demanded by its position as a member of a spondee, or the customary accentuation of the word in conversation. There is no hesitation, and should be none. We at once give up the sound for the sense; and the rhythm is imperfect. In this instance it is *very* slightly so;—not one person in ten thousand could, by ear, detect the inaccuracy. But the *perfection* of Verse, as regards melody, consists in its *never* demanding any such sacrifice as is here demanded. The rhythmical, must agree, *thoroughly*, with the reading, flow. This perfection has in no instance been attained—but is unquestionably

attainable. "*Smile on such,*" the dactyl, is incorrect, because "*such,*" from the character of the two consonants *ch*, cannot *easily* be enunciated in the ordinary time of a short syllable, which its position declares that it is. Almost every reader will be able to appreciate the slight difficulty here; and yet the error is by no means so important as that of the "*And*" in the spondee. By dexterity we *may* pronounce "*such*" in the true time; but the attempt to remedy the rhythmical deficiency of the "*And*" by drawing it out, merely aggravates the offence against natural enunciation, by directing attention to the offence.

My main object, however, in quoting these lines, is to show that, in spite of the prosodies, the length of a line is entirely an arbitrary matter. We might divide the commencement of Byron's poem thus:

Know ye the | land where the |

or thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and |

or thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle are |

or thus:

Know ye the | land where the | cypress and | myrtle are | emblems of |

In short, we may give it any division we please, and the lines will be good—provided we have at least *two* feet in a line. As in mathematics two units are required to form number, so rhythm (from the Greek αριθμος, number) demands for its formation at least two feet. Beyond doubt, we often see such lines as

Know ye the—
Land where the—

lines of one foot; and our prosodies admit such; but with impropriety: for common-sense would dictate that every so obvious division of a poem as is made by a line, should include within itself all that is necessary for its own comprehension; but in a line of one foot we can have no appreciation of *rhythm*, which depends upon the equality between *two* or more pulsations. The false lines, consisting sometimes of a single cæsura, which are seen in mock Pindaric odes, are of course "rhythmical" only in connection with some other line; and it is this want of independent rhythm which adapts them to the purposes of burlesque alone. Their effect is that of incongruity (the principle of mirth), for they include the blankness of prose amid the harmony of verse.

My second object in quoting Byron's lines, was that of showing how absurd it often is to cite a single line from amid the body of a poem, for the purpose of instancing the perfection or imperfection of the line's rhythm. Were we to see by itself

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle,

we might justly condemn it as defective in the final foot, which is equal to only three, instead of being equal to four, short syllables.

In the foot "*flowers ever*" we shall find a further exemplification of the principle of the bastard iambus, bastard

trochee, and quick trochee, as I have been at some pains in describing these feet above. All the Prosodies on English Verse would insist upon making an elision in "*flowers*," thus "*flow'rs*," but this is nonsense. In the quick trochee "*māny ăre thĕ*" occurring in Mr. Cranch's *trochaic* line, we had to equalize the time of the three syllables "*any, are, the*" to that of the one *short* syllable whose position they usurp. Accordingly each of these syllables is equal to the third of a short syllable—that is to say, the *sixth of a long*. But in Byron's *dactylic* rhythm, we have to equalize the time of the three syllables "*ers, ev, er*" to that of the one *long* syllable whose position they usurp, or (which is the same thing) of the *two short*. Therefore, the value of each of the syllables "*ers, ev*, and *er*" is the *third of a long*. We enunciate them with only half the rapidity we employ in enunciating the three final syllables of the quick trochee—which latter is a rare foot. The "*flowers ever*," on the contrary, is as common in the dactylic rhythm as is the *bastard* trochee in the trochaic, or the bastard iambus in the iambic. We may as well accent it with the curve of the crescent to the right, and call it a *bastard dactyl*. A *bastard anapæst*, whose nature I now need be at no trouble in explaining, will of course occur, now and then, in an anapæstic rhythm.

In order to avoid any chance of that confusion which is apt to be introduced in an essay of this kind by too sudden and radical an alteration of the conventionalities to which the reader has been accustomed, I have thought it

right to suggest for the accent marks of the bastard trochee, bastard iambus, etc., etc., certain characters which, in merely varying the direction of the ordinary short accent (˘), should imply, what is the fact, that the feet themselves are not *new* feet, in any proper sense, but simply modifications of the feet, respectively, from which they derive their names. Thus a bastard iambus is, in its essentiality,—that is to say, in its time,—an iambus. The variation lies only in the *distribution* of this time. The time, for example, occupied by the one short (or *half of long*) syllable, in the ordinary iambus, is, in the bastard, spread equally over two syllables, which are accordingly the *fourth of long*.

But this fact—the fact of the essentiality, or whole time, of the foot being unchanged—is now so fully before the reader that I may venture to propose, finally, an accentuation which shall answer the real purpose—that is to say, what should be the real purpose of all accentuation—the purpose of expressing to the eye the exact relative value of every syllable employed in Verse.

I have already shown that enunciation, or *length*, is the point from which we start. In other words, we begin with a *long syllable*. This, then, is our unit; and there will be no need of accenting it at all. An unaccented syllable, in a system of accentuation, is to be regarded always as a long syllable. Thus a spondee would be without accent. In an iambus, the first syllable being "short," or the *half* of long, should be accented with a small 2, placed

beneath the syllable; the last syllable, being long, should be unaccented: the whole would be thus (control$_{2}$). In a trochee, these accents would be merely conversed, thus (manly$_{2}$). In a dactyl, each of the two final syllables, being the half of long, should, also, be accented with a small 2 beneath the syllable; and, the first syllable left unaccented, the whole would be thus (happiness$_{2\ 2}$). In an anapæst we should converse the dactyl, thus (in the land$_{2\ 2}$). In the bastard dactyl, each of the three concluding syllables being the *third* of long, should be accented with a small 3 beneath the syllable, and the whole foot would stand thus (flowers ever$_{3\ 3\ 3}$). In the bastard anapæst we should converse the bastard dactyl, thus (in the rebound$_{3\ 3\ 3}$). In the bastard iambus, each of the two initial syllables, being the *fourth* of long, should be accented below with a small 4; the whole foot would be thus (in the rain$_{4\ 4}$). In the bastard trochee we should converse the bastard iambus, thus (many a$_{4\ 4}$). In the quick trochee, each of the three concluding syllables, being the *sixth* of long, should be accented below with a small 6; the whole foot would be thus (many are the$_{6\ 6\ 6}$). The quick iambus is not yet created, and most probably never will be, for it will be excessively useless, awkward, and liable to misconception, —as I have already shown that even the quick trochee is, —but, should it appear, we must accent it by conversing the quick trochee. The cæsura, being variable in length,

but always *longer than* "*long*," should be accented *above*, with a number expressing the length or value of the distinctive foot of the rhythm in which it occurs. Thus a cæsura, occurring in a spondaic rhythm, would be accented with a small 2 above the syllable, or, rather, foot. Occurring in a dactylic or anapæstic rhythm, we also accent it with the 2, above the foot. Occurring in an iambic rhythm, however, it must be accented, above, with $1\frac{1}{2}$, for this is the relative value of the iambus. Occurring in the trochaic rhythm, we give it, of course, the same accentuation. For the complex $1\frac{1}{2}$, however, it would be advisable to substitute the simpler expression, $\frac{3}{2}$, which amounts to the same thing.

In this system of accentuation Mr. Cranch's lines, quoted above, would thus be written:

$$\overset{6}{\text{Many}}\ \overset{6}{\text{are}}\ \overset{6}{\text{the}} \mid \text{thoughts}\ \overset{2}{\text{that}} \mid \text{come}\ \overset{2}{\text{to}} \mid \overset{\frac{3}{2}}{\text{me}}$$
$$\overset{2}{\text{In}}\ \overset{2}{\text{my}} \mid \text{lonely}\ \overset{2}{\text{|}}\ \text{musing,} \mid$$

$$\overset{2}{\text{And}}\ \overset{2}{\text{they}} \mid \text{drift}\ \overset{2}{\text{so}} \mid \text{strange}\ \overset{2}{\text{and}} \mid \overset{\frac{3}{2}}{\text{swift}}$$
$$\overset{2}{\text{There}}\ \text{'s}\ \overset{2}{\text{no}} \mid \text{time}\ \overset{2}{\text{for}} \mid \text{choosing} \mid$$

$$\overset{2}{\text{Which}}\ \overset{2}{\text{to}} \mid \text{follow,} \mid \text{for}\ \overset{2}{\text{to}} \mid \overset{\frac{3}{2}}{\text{leave}}$$
$$\overset{2}{\text{Any}} \mid \text{seems}\ \overset{2}{\text{a}} \mid \text{losing.} \mid$$

In the ordinary system the accentuation would be thus:

Māny arĕ thĕ | thōughts thăt | cōme tŏ | mē
In my | lōnely | mūsĭng, |
And thĕy | drīft sō | strānge ănd | swīft |

Thĕre's nŏ | tīme fŏr | choōsĭng |
Whīch tŏ | fōllŏw, | fōr tŏ | lēave
Any | sēems ă | lōsĭng. |

It must be observed here that I do not grant this to be the "ordinary" *scansion.* On the contrary, I never yet met the man who had the faintest comprehension of the true scanning of these lines, or of such as these. But granting this to be the mode in which our prosodies would divide the feet, they would accentuate the syllables as just above.

Now, let any reasonable person compare the two modes. The first advantage seen in my mode is that of simplicity—of time, labor, and ink saved. Counting the fractions as *two* accents, even, there will be found only *twenty-six* accents to the stanza. In the common accentuation there are *forty-one.* But admit that all this is a trifle, which it is *not*, and let us proceed to points of importance. Does the common accentuation express the truth in particular, in general, or in any regard? Is it consistent with itself? Does it convey either to the ignorant or to the scholar a just conception of the rhythm of the lines? Each of these questions must be answered in the negative. The crescents, being precisely similar, must be understood as expressing, all of them, one and the same thing; and so all prosodies have always understood them and wished them to be understood. They express, indeed, "short"; but this word has all kinds of meanings. It serves to represent (the reader is

left to guess *when*) sometimes the half, sometimes the third, sometimes the fourth, sometimes the sixth of "long"; while "long" itself, in the books, is left undefined and undescribed. On the other hand, the horizontal accent, it may be said, expresses sufficiently well and unvaryingly the syllables which are meant to be long. It does nothing of the kind. This horizontal accent is placed over the cæsura (wherever, as in the Latin Prosodies, the cæsura is recognized) as well as over the ordinary long syllable, and implies any thing and every thing, just as the crescent. But grant that it does express the ordinary long syllables (leaving the cæsura out of question), have I not given the identical expression by not employing any expression at all? In a word, while the prosodies, with a certain number of accents express *precisely nothing whatever*, I, with scarcely half the number, have expressed every thing which, in a system of accentuation, demands expression. In glancing at my mode in the lines of Mr. Cranch it will be seen that it conveys not only the exact relation of the syllables and feet, among themselves, in those particular lines, but their precise value in relation to any other existing or conceivable feet or syllables in any existing or conceivable system of rhythm.

The object of what we call *scansion* is the distinct marking of the rhythmical flow. Scansion with accents or perpendicular lines between the feet—that is to say, scansion *by* the voice only—is scansion *to* the ear only; and all very good in its way. The written scansion addresses

the ear through the eye. In either case the object is the distinct marking of the rhythmical, musical, or reading flow. There *can* be no other object, and there is none. Of course, then, the scansion and the reading flow should go hand-in-hand. The former must agree with the latter. The former represents and expresses the latter; and is good or bad as it truly or falsely represents and expresses it. If by the written scansion of a line we are not enabled to perceive any rhythm or music in the line, then either the line is unrhythmical or the scansion false. Apply all this to the English lines which we have quoted, at various points, in the course of this article. It will be found that the scansion exactly conveys the rhythm, and thus thoroughly fulfils the only purpose for which scansion is required.

But let the scansion *of the schools* be applied to the Greek and Latin verse, and what result do we find?—that the verse is one thing and the scansion quite another. The ancient verse, *read* aloud, is in general musical, and occasionally *very* musical. *Scanned* by the prosodial rules we can, for the most part, make nothing of it whatever. In the case of the English verse, the more emphatically we dwell on the divisions between the feet, the more distinct is our perception of the kind of rhythm intended. In the case of the Greek and Latin, the more we dwell the *less* distinct is this perception. To make this clear by an example:

Mæcenas, atavis edite regibus,
O, et præsidium et dulce decus meum,
Sunt quos curriculo pulverem Olympicum
Collegisse juvat, metaque fervidis
Evitata rotis, palmaque nobilis
Terrarum dominos evehit ad Deos.

Now in *reading* these lines, there is scarcely one person in a thousand who, if even ignorant of Latin, will not immediately feel and appreciate their flow—their music. A prosodist, however, informs the public that the *scansion* runs thus:

Mæce | nas ata | vis | edite | regibus |
O et | præsidi' | et | dulce de | cus meum |
Sunt quos | curricu | lo | pulver' O | lympicum |
Colle | gisse ju | vat | metaque | fervidis |
Evi | tata ro | tis | palmaque | nobilis |
Terra | rum domi | nos | evehit | ad Deos. |

Now I do not deny that we get a *certain sort* of music from the lines if we read them according to this scansion, but I wish to call attention to the fact that this scansion, and the certain sort of music which grows out of it, are entirely at war not only with the reading flow which any ordinary person would naturally give the lines, but with the reading flow universally given them, and never denied them, by even the most obstinate and stolid of scholars.

And now these questions are forced upon us: "Why exists this discrepancy between the modern verse with its scansion, and the ancient verse with its scansion?"—"Why, in the former case, are there agreement and representation, while in the latter there is neither the one nor

the other?" or, to come to the point,—"How are we to reconcile the ancient verse with the scholastic scansion of it?" This absolutely necessary conciliation—shall we bring it about by supposing the scholastic scansion wrong because the ancient verse is right, or by maintaining that the ancient verse is wrong because the scholastic scansion is not to be gainsaid?

Were we to adopt the latter mode of arranging the difficulty, we might, in some measure, at least simplify the expression of the arrangement by putting it thus: Because the pedants have no eyes, therefore the old poets had no ears.

"But," say the gentlemen without the eyes, "the scholastic scansion, although certainly not handed down to us in form from the old poets themselves (the gentlemen without the ears), is nevertheless deduced from certain facts which are supplied us by careful observation of the old poems.

And let us illustrate this strong position by an example from an American poet—who must be a poet of some eminence, or he will not answer the purpose. Let us take Mr. Alfred B. Street. I remember these two lines of his:

> His sinuous path, by blazes, wound
> Among trunks grouped in myriads round.

With the *sense* of these lines I have nothing to do. When a poet is in a "fine frenzy," he may as well imagine a large forest as a small one; and "by blazes" is *not*

intended for an oath. My concern is with the rhythm, which is iambic.

Now let us suppose that, a thousand years hence, when the "American language" is dead, a learned prosodist should be deducing, from "careful observation" of our best poets, a system of scansion for our poetry. And let us suppose that this prosodist had so little dependence in the generality and immutability of the laws of Nature, as to assume in the outset, that, because we lived a thousand years before his time, and made use of steam-engines instead of mesmeric balloons, we must therefore have had a *very* singular fashion of mouthing our vowels, and altogether of hudsonizing our verse. And let us suppose that with these and other fundamental propositions carefully put away in his brain, he should arrive at the line,—

Among | trunks grouped | in my | riads round.

Finding it an obviously iambic rhythm, he would divide it as above; and observing that "trunks" made the first member of an iambus, he would call it short, as Mr. Street intended it to be. Now farther, if instead of admitting the possibility that Mr. Street (who by that time would be called Street simply, just as we say Homer) —that Mr. Street might have been in the habit of writing carelessly, as the poets of the prosodist's own era did, and as all poets will do (on account of being geniuses),—instead of admitting this, suppose the learned scholar should make a "rule" and put it in a book, to the effect

that, in the American verse, the vowel *u*, *when found imbedded among nine consonants*, was *short*, what, under such circumstances, would the sensible people of the scholar's day have a right not only to think but to say of that scholar?—why, that he was "a fool—by blazes!"

I have put an extreme case, but it strikes at the root of the error. The "rules" are grounded in "authority"; and this "authority"—can any one tell us what it means? or can any one suggest any thing that it may *not* mean? Is it not clear that the "scholar" above referred to, might as readily have deduced from authority a totally false system as a partially true one? To deduce from authority a consistent prosody of the ancient metres would indeed have been within the limits of the barest possibility; and the task has *not* been accomplished, for the reason that it demands a species of ratiocination altogether out of keeping with the brain of a bookworm. A rigid scrutiny will show that the very few "rules" which have not as many exceptions as examples, are those which have, by accident, their true bases not in authority, but in the omniprevalent laws of syllabification; such, for example, as the rule which declares a vowel before two consonants to be long.

In a word, the gross confusion and antagonism of the scholastic prosody, as well as its marked inapplicability to the reading flow of the rhythms it pretends to illustrate, are attributable, first, to the utter absence of natural principle as a guide in the investigations which have been

undertaken by inadequate men; and secondly, to the neglect of the obvious consideration that the ancient poems, which have been the *criteria* throughout, were the work of men who must have written as loosely, and with as little definitive system, as ourselves.

Were Horace alive to-day, he would divide for us his first Ode thus, and "make great eyes" when assured by prosodists that he had no business to make any such division!

Mæcenas | atavis | edite | regibus |
2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2
O et præ | sidium et | dulce de | cus meum |
2 2 3 3 3 2 2 2 2
Sunt quos cur | riculo | pulverem O | lympicum |
2 2 2 2 3 3 3 2 2
Collegisse | juvat | metaque | fervidis |
3 3 3 2 2 2 2
Evitata | rotis | palmaque | nobilis |
3 3 3 2 2 2 2
Terrarum | dominos | evehit | ad Deos. |
2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

Read by this scansion, the flow is preserved; and the more we dwell on the divisions, the more the intended rhythm becomes apparent. Moreover, the feet have all the same time; while, in the scholastic scansion, trochees —admitted trochees—are absurdly employed as equivalents to spondees and dactyls. The books declare, for instance, that *Colle*, which begins the fourth line, is a trochee, and seem to be gloriously unconscious that to put a trochee in opposition with a longer foot, is to violate the inviolable principle of all music, *time*.

It will be said, however, by "some people," that I have no business to make a dactyl out of such obviously long

syllables as *sunt*, *quos*, *cur*. Certainly I have no business to do so. I *never* do so. And Horace should not have done so. But he did. Mr. Bryant and Mr. Longfellow do the same thing every day. And merely because these gentlemen, now and then, forget themselves in this way, it would be hard if some future prosodist should insist upon twisting the "Thanatopsis," or the "Spanish Student," into a jumble of trochees, spondees, and dactyls.

It may be said, also, by some other people, that in the word *decus*, I have succeeded no better than the books, in making the scansional agree with the reading flow; and that *decus* was not pronounced de*cus*. I reply, that there can be no doubt of the word having been pronounced, in this case, de*cus*. It must be observed, that the Latin inflection, or variation of a word in its terminating syllable, caused the Romans—*must* have caused them—to pay greater attention to the termination of a word than to its commencement, or than we do to the terminations of our words. The end of the Latin word established that relation of the word with other words which we establish by prepositions or auxiliary verbs. Therefore, it would seem infinitely less odd to them than it does to us, to dwell at any time, for any slight purpose, abnormally, on a terminating syllable. In verse, this license—scarcely a license—would be frequently admitted. These ideas unlock the secret of such lines as the

Litoreis ingens inventa sub ilici*bus sus*,

and the

Parturiunt montes et nascitur ridicu*lus mus*,

which I quoted, some time ago, while speaking of rhyme.

As regards the prosodial elisions, such as that of *rem* before *O*, in *pulverem Olympicum*, it is really difficult to understand how so dismally silly a notion could have entered the brain even of a pedant. Were it demanded of me why the books cut off one *vowel* before another, I might say: It is, perhaps, because the books think that, since a bad reader is so apt to slide the one vowel into the other at any rate, it is just as well to print them *ready-slided.* But in the case of the terminating *m*, which is the most readily pronounced of all consonants (as the infantile *mamma* will testify), and the most impossible to cheat the ear of by any system of sliding—in the case of the *m*, I should be driven to reply that, to the best of my belief, the prosodists did the thing, because they had a fancy for doing it, and wished to see how funny it would look after it was done. The thinking reader will perceive that, from the great facility with which *em* may be enunciated, it is admirably suited to form one of the rapid short syllables in the bastard dactyl (pulverem O); but because the books had no conception of a bastard dactyl, they knocked it on the head at once—by cutting off its tail!

Let me now give a specimen of the true scansion of another Horatian measure—embodying an instance of proper elision.

Integer | vitæ | scelerisque | purus |
2 2 3 3 3
Non eget | Mauri | jaculis ne | que arcu |
2 2 3 3 3
Nec vene | natis | gravida sa | gittis |
2 2 3 3 3
Fusce pha | retrâ.
2 2

Here the regular recurrence of the bastard dactyl gives great animation to the rhythm. The *e* before the *a* in *que arcu*, is, almost of sheer necessity, cut off—that is to say, run into the *a* so as to preserve the spondee. But even this license it would have been better not to take.

Had I space, nothing would afford me greater pleasure than to proceed with the scansion of *all* the ancient rhythms, and to show how easily, by the help of common-sense, the intended music of each and all can be rendered instantaneously apparent. But I have already overstepped my limits, and must bring this paper to an end.

It will never do, however, to omit all mention of the heroic hexameter.

I began the "processes" by a suggestion of the spondee as the first step toward verse. But the innate monotony of the spondee has caused its disappearance, as the basis of rhythm, from all modern poetry. We *may* say, indeed, that the French heroic—the most wretchedly monotonous verse in existence—is, to all intents and purposes, spondaic. But it is not designedly spondaic—and if the French were ever to examine it at all, they would no doubt pronounce it iambic. It must be observed that the French language is strangely peculiar in this point—

that it is without accentuation, and consequently without verse. The genius of the people, rather than the structure of the tongue, declares that their words are, for the most part, enunciated with a uniform dwelling on each syllable. For example, *we* say "syl*la*bific*a*tion." A Frenchman would say syl-la-bi-fi-ca-ti-on; dwelling on no one of the syllables with any noticeable particularity. Here again I put an extreme case, in order to be well understood; but the general fact is as I give it—that, comparatively, the French have *no* accentuation. And there can be nothing worth the name of verse without. Therefore, the French have no verse worth the name—which is the fact, put in sufficiently plain terms. Their iambic rhythm so superabounds in absolute spondees, as to warrant me in calling its basis spondaic; but French is the *only* modern tongue which has any rhythm with such basis; and even in the French, it is, as I have said, unintentional.

Admitting, however, the validity of my suggestion, that the spondee was the first approach to verse, we should expect to find, first, natural spondees (words each forming just a spondee) most abundant in the most ancient languages; and, secondly, we should expect to find spondees forming the basis of the most ancient rhythms. These expectations are in both cases confirmed.

Of the Greek hexameter, the intentional basis is spondaic. The dactyls are the *variation* of the theme. It will be observed that there is no absolute certainty about *their* points of interposition. The penultimate foot, it is

true, is usually a dactyl; but not uniformly so; while the ultimate, on which the ear *lingers*, is always a spondee. Even that the penultimate is usually a dactyl may be clearly referred to the necessity of winding up with the *distinctive* spondee. In corroboration of this idea, again, we should look to find the penultimate spondee most usual in the most ancient verse; and, accordingly, we find it more frequent in the Greek than in the Latin hexameter.

But besides all this, spondees are not only more prevalent in the heroic hexameter than dactyls, but occur to such an extent as is even unpleasant to modern ears, on account of monotony. What the modern chiefly appreciates and admires in the Greek hexameter, is the *melody of the abundant vowel sounds.* The Latin hexameters *really* please very few moderns—although so many pretend to fall into ecstasies about them. In the hexameters quoted, several pages ago, from Silius Italicus, the preponderance of the spondee is strikingly manifest. Besides the natural spondees of the Greek and Latin, numerous artificial ones arise in the verse of these tongues on account of the tendency which inflection has to throw full accentuation on terminal syllables; and the preponderance of the spondee is farther insured by the comparative infrequency of the small prepositions which *we* have to serve us *instead* of case, and also the absence of the diminutive auxiliary verbs with which *we* have to eke out the expression of our primary ones. These are the mono-

syllables whose abundance serve to stamp the poetic genius of a language as tripping or dactylic.

Now, paying no attention to these facts, Sir Philip Sidney, Professor Longfellow, and innumerable other persons more or less modern, have busied themselves in constructing what they suppose to be "English hexameters on the model of the Greek." The only difficulty was that (even leaving out of question the melodious masses of vowels) these gentlemen never could get their English hexameters to *sound* Greek. Did they *look* Greek?—that should have been the query; and the reply might have led to a solution of the riddle. In placing a copy of ancient hexameters side by side with a copy (in similar type) of such hexameters as Professor Longfellow, or Professor Felton, or the Frogpondian Professors collectively, are in the shameful practice of composing "on the model of the Greek," it will be seen that the latter (hexameters, not professors) are about one third longer *to the eye*, on an average, than the former. The more abundant dactyls make the difference. And it is the greater number of spondees in the Greek than in the English—in the ancient than in the modern tongue—which has caused it to fall out that while these eminent scholars were groping about in the dark for a Greek hexameter, which is a spondaic rhythm varied now and then by dactyls, they merely stumbled, to the lasting scandal of scholarship, over something which, on account of its long-leggedness, we may as well term a Feltonian hexameter, and which is a dactylic

rhythm, interrupted, rarely, by artificial spondees which are no spondees at all, and which are curiously thrown in by the heels at all kinds of improper and impertinent points.

Here is a specimen of the Longfellownian hexameter.

Also the | church with | in was a | dorned for | this was the | season
In which the | young their | parents' | hope and the | loved ones of | Heaven |
Should at the | foot of the | altar re | new the | vows of their | baptism |
Therefore each | nook and | corner was | swept and | cleaned and the | dust was |
Blown from the | walls and | ceiling and | from the | oil-painted | benches |

Mr. Longfellow is a man of imagination—but *can* he imagine that any individual, with a proper understanding of the danger of lock-jaw, would make the attempt of twisting his mouth into the shape necessary for the emission of such spondees as "par*ents*," and "from the," or such dactyls as "cleaned and the," and "loved ones of"? "Baptism" is by no means a bad spondee—perhaps because it happens to be a dactyl;—of all the rest, however, I am dreadfully ashamed.

But these feet—dactyls and spondees, all together—should thus be put at once into their proper position:

"Also, the church within was adorned; for this was the season in which the young, their parents' hope, and the loved ones of Heaven, should, at the foot of the altar, renew the vows of their baptism. Therefore each nook and corner was swept and cleaned; and the dust was blown from the walls and ceiling, and from the oil-painted benches."

There!—That is respectable prose; and it will incur no danger of ever getting its character ruined by anybody's mistaking it for verse.

But even when we let these modern hexameters go, as Greek, and merely hold them fast in their proper character of Longfellownian, or Feltŏnian, or Frogpondian, we must still condemn them as having been committed in a radical misconception of the philosophy of verse. The spondee, as I observed, is the *theme* of the Greek line. Most of the ancient hexameters *begin* with spondees, for the reason that the spondee *is* the theme; and the ear is filled with it as with a burden. Now the Feltonian dactylics have, in the same way, dactyls for the theme, and most of them begin with dactyls—which is all very proper if not very Greek,—but, unhappily, the one point at which they *are* very Greek is that point, precisely, at which they should be nothing but Feltonian. They always *close* with what is meant for a spondee. To be consistently silly, they should die off in a dactyl.

That a truly Greek hexameter *cannot*, however, be readily composed in English, is a proposition which I am by no means inclined to admit. I think I could manage the point myself. For example:

Do tell! | when may we | hope to make | men of sense | out of the | Pundits |
Born and brought | up with their | snouts deep | down in the | mud of the | Frog-pond? |
Why ask? | who ever | yet saw | money made | out of a | fat old |
Jew, or | downright | upright | nutmegs | out of a | pine-knot? |

The proper spondee predominance is here preserved. Some of the dactyls are not so good as I could wish—but, upon the whole, the rhythm is very decent—to say nothing of its excellent sense.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE RAVEN.

ONCE upon a midnight dreary, while I pondered, weak and weary,
Over many a quaint and curious volume of forgotten lore—
While I nodded, nearly napping, suddenly there came a tapping,
As of some one gently rapping, rapping at my chamber door.
"'T is some visitor," I muttered, "tapping at my chamber door—
Only this and nothing more."

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December,
And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor.
Eagerly I wished the morrow ;—vainly I had sought to borrow
From my books surcease of sorrow—sorrow for the lost Lenore—
For the rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name Lenore—
Nameless here for evermore.

And the silken sad uncertain rustling of each purple curtain
Thrilled me—filled me with fantastic terrors never felt before ;
So that now, to still the beating of my heart, I stood repeating :
" 'T is some visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door—
Some late visitor entreating entrance at my chamber door ;
This it is and nothing more."

Presently my soul grew stronger ; hesitating then no longer,
" Sir," said I, " or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore ;
But the fact is I was napping, and so gently you came rapping,
And so faintly you came tapping, tapping at my chamber door,
That I scarce was sure I heard you "—here I opened wide the door ;—
Darkness there and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortals ever dared to dream before ;
But the silence was unbroken, and the stillness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, " Lenore ! "
This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, " Lenore ! "—
Merely this and nothing more.

Back into the chamber turning, all my soul within me burning,
Soon again I heard a tapping something louder than before.
" Surely," said I, " surely that is something at my window lattice ;

Let me see, then, what thereat is, and this mystery explore—
Let my heart be still a moment, and this mystery explore ;—
'T is the wind and nothing more."

Open here I flung the shutter, when, with many a flirt and flutter,
In there stepped a stately Raven of the saintly days of yore.
Not the least obeisance made he ; not a minute stopped or stayed he,
But, with mien of lord or lady, perched above my chamber door—
Perched upon a bust of Pallas just above my chamber door—
Perched, and sat, and nothing more.

Then this ebony bird beguiling my sad fancy into smiling,
By the grave and stern decorum of the countenance it wore,
"Though thy crest be shorn and shaven, thou," I said, "art sure no craven,
Ghastly grim and ancient Raven wandering from the Nightly shore—
Tell me what thy lordly name is on the Night's Plutonian shore !"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

Much I marvelled this ungainly fowl to hear discourse so plainly,
Though its answer little meaning—little relevancy bore ;
For we cannot help agreeing that no living human being
Ever yet was blessed with seeing bird above his chamber door—
Bird or beast upon the sculptured bust above his chamber door,
With such name as "Nevermore."

But the Raven, sitting lonely on that placid bust, spoke only
That one word, as if his soul in that one word he did outpour.
Nothing farther then he uttered ; not a feather then he fluttered—
Till I scarcely more than muttered : "Other friends have flown before—
On the morrow *he* will leave me as my Hopes have flown before."
Then the bird said, "Nevermore."

Startled at the stillness broken by reply so aptly spoken,
"Doubtless," said I, "what it utters is its only stock and store,
Caught from some unhappy master whom unmerciful Disaster
Followed fast and followed faster till his songs one burden bore—
Till the dirges of his Hope that melancholy burden bore
Of 'Never—nevermore.'"

But the Raven still beguiling all my sad soul into smiling,
Straight I wheeled a cushioned seat in front of bird and bust and door ;
Then, upon the velvet sinking, I betook myself to linking
Fancy unto fancy, thinking what this ominous bird of yore—
What this grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore
Meant in croaking "Nevermore."

This I sat engaged in guessing, but no syllable expressing
To the fowl whose fiery eyes now burned into my bosom's core ;

This and more I sat divining, with my head at ease reclining
On the cushion's velvet lining that the lamp-light gloated o'er,
But whose velvet violet lining with the lamp-light gloating o'er
She shall press, ah, nevermore !

Then, methought, the air grew denser, perfumed from an unseen censer
Swung by Seraphim whose foot-falls tinkled on the tufted floor.
"Wretch," I cried, "thy God hath lent thee—by these angels he hath sent thee
Respite—respite and nepenthe from thy memories of Lenore !
Quaff, oh quaff this kind nepenthe and forget this lost Lenore !"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet !" said I, "thing of evil !—prophet still, if bird or devil !—
Whether Tempter sent, or whether tempest tossed thee here ashore,
Desolate, yet all undaunted, on this desert land enchanted—
On this home by Horror haunted,—tell me truly, I implore—
Is there—*is* there balm in Gilead ?—tell me—tell me, I implore !"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Prophet !" said I, "thing of evil !—prophet still, if bird or devil !
By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—
Tell this soul with sorrow laden if, within the distant Aidenn,

It shall clasp a sainted maiden whom the angels name
Lenore—
Clasp a rare and radiant maiden whom the angels name
Lenore."
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

"Be that word our sign of parting, bird or fiend!" I shrieked,
upstarting—
"Get thee back into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian
shore!
Leave no black plume as a token of that lie thy soul hath
spoken!
Leave my loneliness unbroken!—quit the bust above my
door!
Take thy beak from out my heart, and take thy form from off
my door!"
Quoth the Raven, "Nevermore."

And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dream-
ing,
And the lamp-light o'er him streaming throws his shadow on
the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the
floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!

LENORE.

AH, broken is the golden bowl ! the spirit flown forever !
Let the bell toll !—a saintly soul floats on the Stygian river ;
And, Guy De Vere, hast *thou* no tear ?—weep now or never more !
See on yon drear and rigid bier low lies thy love, Lenore !
Come ! let the burial rite be read—the funeral song be sung !—
An anthem for the queenliest dead that ever died so young—
A dirge for her the doubly dead in that she died so young.

" Wretches ! ye loved her for her wealth and hated her for her pride,
And when she fell in feeble health, ye blessed her—that she died !
How *shall* the ritual, then, be read ?—the requiem how be sung
By you—by yours, the evil eye,—by yours, the slanderous tongue
That did to death the innocence that died, and died so young ? "

Peccavimus ; but rave not thus ! and let a Sabbath song
Go up to God so solemnly the dead may feel no wrong !
The sweet Lenore hath " gone before," with Hope, that flew beside,
Leaving thee wild for the dear child that should have been thy bride—

For her, the fair and *debonnaire*, that now so lowly lies,
The life upon her yellow hair but not within her eyes—
The life still there, upon her hair—the death upon her eyes.

Avaunt! to-night my heart is light. No dirge will I upraise,
But waft the angel on her flight with a pæan of old days!
Let *no* bell toll!—lest her sweet soul, amid its hallowed mirth,
Should catch the note, as it doth float up from the damnèd Earth.
To friends above, from fiends below, the indignant ghost is riven—
From Hell unto a high estate far up within the Heaven—
From grief and groan, to a golden throne, beside the King of Heaven."

HYMN.

AT morn—at noon—at twilight dim—
Maria! thou hast heard my hymn!
In joy and woe—in good and ill—
Mother of God, be with me still!
When the Hours flew brightly by,
And not a cloud obscured the sky,
My soul, lest it should truant be,
Thy grace did guide to thine and thee;
Now, when storms of Fate o'ercast
Darkly my Present and my Past,
Let my Future radiant shine
With sweet hopes of thee and thine!

A VALENTINE.

FOR her this rhyme is penned, whose luminous eyes,
Brightly expressive as the twins of Lœda,
Shall find her own sweet name, that, nestling lies
Upon the page, enwrapped from every reader.
Search narrowly the lines!—they hold a treasure
Divine—a talisman—an amulet
That must be worn *at heart.* Search well the measure—
The words—the syllables! Do not forget
The trivialest point, or you may lose your labor!
And yet there is in this no Gordian knot
Which one might not undo without a sabre,
If one could merely comprehend the plot.
Enwritten upon the leaf where now are peering
Eyes' scintillating soul, there lie *perdus*
Three eloquent words oft uttered in the hearing
Of poets, by poets—as the name is a poet's too.
Its letters, although naturally lying
Like the knight Pinto—Mendez Ferdinando—
Still form a synonym for Truth.—Cease trying!
You will not read the riddle, though you do the best you *can* do.

[To translate the address, read the first letter of the first line in connection with the second letter of the second line, the third letter of the third line, the fourth of the fourth, and so on to the end. The name will thus appear.]

THE COLISEUM.

TYPE of the antique Rome! Rich reliquary
Of lofty contemplation left to Time
By buried centuries of pomp and power!
At length—at length—after so many days
Of weary pilgrimage and burning thirst
(Thirst for the springs of lore that in thee lie),
I kneel, an altered and an humble man,
Amid thy shadows, and so drink within
My very soul thy grandeur, gloom, and glory!

Vastness! and Age! and Memories of Eld!
Silence! and Desolation! and dim Night!
I feel ye now—I feel ye in your strength—
O spells more sure than e'er Judæan king
Taught in the gardens of Gethsemane!
O charms more potent than the rapt Chaldee
Ever drew down from out the quiet stars!

Here, where a hero fell, a column falls!
Here, where a mimic eagle glared in gold,
A midnight vigil holds the swarthy bat!
Here, where the dames of Rome their gilded hair
Waved to the wind, now wave the reed and thistle!
Here, where on golden throne the monarch lolled,
Glides, spectre-like, unto his marble home,
Lit by the wan light of the hornèd moon,
The swift and silent lizard of the stones!

But stay ! these walls—these ivy-clad arcades—
These mouldering plinths—these sad and blackened shafts—
These vague entablatures—this crumbling frieze—
These shattered cornices—this wreck—this ruin—
These stones—alas ! these gray stones—are they all-
All of the famed, and the colossal left
By the corrosive Hours to Fate and me ?

"Not all"—the Echoes answer me—"not all !
Prophetic sounds and loud arise forever
From us, and from all Ruin, unto the wise,
As melody from Memnon to the Sun.
We rule the hearts of mightiest men—we rule
With a despotic sway all giant minds.
We are not impotent—we pallid stones.
Not all our power is gone—not all our fame—
Not all the magic of our high renown—
Not all the wonder that encircles us—
Not all the mysteries that in us lie—
Not all the memories that hang upon
And cling around about us as a garment,
Clothing us in a robe of more than glory."

TO HELEN.

I SAW thee once—once only—years ago ;
I must not say *how* many—but *not* many.
It was a July midnight ; and from out
A full-orbed moon, that, like thine own soul, soaring,
Sought a precipitate pathway up through heaven,
There fell a silvery-silken veil of light,
With quietude, and sultriness, and slumber,
Upon the upturn'd faces of a thousand
Roses that grew in an enchanted garden,
Where no wind dared to stir, unless on tiptoe—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That gave out, in return for the love-light,
Their odorous souls in an ecstatic death—
Fell on the upturn'd faces of these roses
That smiled and died in this parterre, enchanted
By thee, and by the poetry of thy presence.

Clad all in white, upon a violet bank
I saw thee half reclining ; while the moon
Fell on the upturn'd faces of the roses,
And on thine own, upturn'd—alas, in sorrow !

Was it not Fate that, on this July midnight—
Was it not Fate (whose name is also Sorrow),
That bade me pause before that garden-gate,
To breathe the incense of those slumbering roses ?
No footstep stirred ; the hated world all slept,
Save only thee and me. (Oh, Heaven !—oh, God !

How my heart beats in coupling those two words !)
Save only thee and me. I paused—I looked—
And in an instant all things disappeared.
(Ah, bear in mind this garden was enchanted !)

The pearly lustre of the moon went out ;
The mossy banks and the meandering paths,
The happy flowers and the repining trees,
Were seen no more : the very roses' odors
Died in the arms of the adoring airs.
All—all expired save thee—save less than thou :
Save only the divine light in thine eyes—
Save but the soul in thine uplifted eyes.
I saw but them—they were the world to me.
I saw but them—saw only them for hours—
Saw only them until the moon went down.
What wild heart-histories seemed to lie enwritten
Upon those crystalline, celestial spheres !
How dark a woe ! yet how sublime a hope !
How silently serene a sea of pride !
How daring an ambition ! yet how deep—
How fathomless a capacity for love !

But now, at length, dear Dian sank from sight,
Into a western couch of thunder-cloud ;
And thou, a ghost, amid the entombing trees
Didst glide away. *Only thine eyes remained.*
They *would not* go—they never yet have gone.
Lighting my lonely pathway home that night,
They have not left me (as my hopes have) since.

They follow me—they lead me through the years.
They are my ministers—yet I their slave.
Their office is to illumine and enkindle—
My duty, *to be saved* by their bright light,
And purified in their electric fire,
And sanctified in their Elysian fire.
They fill my soul with Beauty (which is Hope),
And are far up in heaven—the stars I kneel to
In the sad, silent watches of my night ;
While even in the meridian glare of day
I see them still—two sweetly scintillant
Venuses, unextinguished by the sun !

TO —— ——.

NOT long ago, the writer of these lines,
In the mad pride of intellectuality,
Maintained "the power of words"—denied that ever
A thought arose within the human brain
Beyond the utterance of the human tongue :
And now, as if in mockery of that boast,
Two words—two foreign soft disyllables—
Italian tones, made only to be murmured
By angels dreaming in the moonlit "dew
That hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon hill,"—
Have stirred from out the abysses of his heart,
Unthought-like thoughts that are the souls of thought,
Richer, far wilder, far diviner visions

Than even the seraph harper, Israfel
(Who has "the sweetest voice of all God's creatures"),
Could hope to utter. And I! my spells are broken.
The pen falls powerless from my shivering hand.
With thy dear name as text, though bidden by thee,
I cannot write—I cannot speak or think—
Alas! I cannot feel; for 't is not feeling,
This standing motionless upon the golden
Threshold of the wide-open gate of dreams,
Gazing, entranced, adown the gorgeous vista,
And thrilling as I see, upon the right,
Upon the left, and all the way along,
Amid unpurpled vapors, far away
To where the prospect terminates—*thee only.*

ULALUME.

THE skies they were ashen and sober;
The leaves they were crisped and sere—
The leaves they were withering and sere;
It was night in the lonesome October
Of my most immemorial year;
It was hard by the dim lake of Auber,
In the misty mid region of Weir—
It was down by the dank tarn of Auber,
In the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

Here once, through an alley Titanic,
Of cypress, I roamed with my Soul—
Of cypress, with Psyche, my Soul.

These were days when my heart was volcanic
As the scoriac rivers that roll—
As the lavas that restlessly roll
Their sulphurous currents down Yaanek
In the ultimate climes of the pole—
That groan as they roll down Mount Yaanek
In the realms of the boreal pole.

Our talk had been serious and sober,
But our thoughts they were palsied and sere—
Our memories were treacherous and sere,—
For we knew not the month was October,
And we marked not the night of the year
(Ah, night of all nights in the year!)—
We noted not the dim lake of Auber
(Though once we had journeyed down here)—
Remembered not the dank tarn of Auber,
Nor the ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir.

And now, as the night was senescent
And star-dials pointed to morn—
As the star-dials hinted of morn—
At the end of our path a liquescent
And nebulous lustre was born,
Out of which a miraculous crescent
Arose with a duplicate horn—
Astarte's bediamonded crescent
Distinct with its duplicate horn.
And I said: "She is warmer than Dian:
She rolls through an ether of sighs—
She revels in a region of sighs:

She has seen that the tears are not dry on
These cheeks, where the worm never dies,
And has come past the stars of the Lion
To point us the path to the skies—
To the Lethean peace of the skies—
Come up, in despite of the Lion,
To shine on us with her bright eyes—
Come up through the lair of the Lion,
With love in her luminous eyes."

But Psyche, uplifting her finger,
Said: "Sadly this star I mistrust—
Her pallor I strangely mistrust:—
Oh, hasten!—oh, let us not linger!
Oh, fly!—let us fly!—for we must."
In terror she spoke, letting sink her
Wings until they trailed in the dust—
In agony sobbed, letting sink her
Plumes till they trailed in the dust—
Till they sorrowfully trailed in the dust.

I replied: "This is nothing but dreaming:
Let us on by this tremulous light!
Let us bathe in this crystalline light!
Its Sybilic splendor is beaming
With Hope and in Beauty to-night!—
See!—it flickers up the sky through the night!
Ah, we safely may trust to its gleaming,
And be sure it will lead us aright—

We safely may trust to a gleaming,
That cannot but guide us aright,
Since it flickers up to Heaven through the night."

Thus I pacified Psyche and kissed her,
And tempted her out of her gloom—
And conquered her scruples and gloom;
And we passed to the end of the vista,
But were stopped by the door of a tomb
By the door of a legended tomb;
And I said: "What is written, sweet sister,
On the door of this legended tomb?"
She replied: "Ulalume—Ulalume—
'T is the vault of thy lost Ulalume!"

Then my heart it grew ashen and sober
As the leaves that were crisped and sere—
As the leaves that were withering and sere,
And I cried: "It was surely October
On *this* very night of last year
That I journeyed—I journeyed down here—
That I brought a dread burden down here—
On this night of all nights in the year,
Ah, what demon has tempted me here?
Well I know, now, this dim lake of Auber—
This misty mid region of Weir—
Well I know, now, this dank tarn of Auber,
This ghoul-haunted woodland of Weir."

THE BELLS.

I.

HEAR the sledges with the bells—
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II.

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And all in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!

Oh, from out the sounding cells
What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
How it swells!
How it dwells
On the Future! how it tells
Of the rapture that impels
To the swinging and the ringing
Of the bells, bells, bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III.

Hear the loud alarum bells—
Brazen bells!
What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
In the startled ear of night
How they scream out their affright!
Too much horrified to speak,
They can only shriek, shriek,
Out of tune,
In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
Leaping higher, higher, higher,
With a desperate desire,
And a resolute endeavor
Now—now to sit, or never,
By the side of the pale-faced moon.
Oh, the bells, bells, bells!

What a tale their terror tells
Of despair!
How they clang, and clash, and roar!
What a horror they outpour
On the bosom of the palpitating air!
Yet the ear it fully knows,
By the twanging,
And the clanging,
How the danger ebbs and flows;
Yet the ear distinctly tells,
In the jangling,
And the wrangling,
How the danger sinks and swells,
By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells—
Of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells—
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV.

Hear the tolling of the bells—
Iron bells!
What a world of solemn thought their melody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.

And the people—ah, the people—
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All alone,
And who tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone—
They are neither man nor woman—
They are neither brute nor human—
They are Ghouls :
And their king it is who tolls ;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A pæan from the bells !
And his merry bosom swells
With the pæan of the bells !
And he dances, and he yells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the pæan of the bells—
Of the bells :
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the sobbing of the bells ;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,
In a happy Runic rhyme,

For every sound that floats
From ~~out their ghostly~~ the rust within their throats
Is a groan.

And the people — ah, the people
~~Who live~~ They that sleep up in the steeple

All alone,
And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone —
They are neither man nor woman —
They are neither brute nor human,
But are pestilential carcases disparted from their souls —
Called Ghouls: —
And their king it is who tolls: —
And he rolls, rolls, rolls, rolls
A Paan from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the Paan of the bells!
And he dances and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the Paan of the bells —
Of the bells: —

To the rolling of the bells—
Of the bells, bells, bells—
To the tolling of the bells,
Of the bells, bells, bells, bells—
Bells, bells, bells—
To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

AN ENIGMA.

"SELDOM we find," says Solomon Don Dunce,
"Half an idea in the profoundest sonnet.
Through all the flimsy things we see at once
As easily as through a Naples bonnet—
Trash of all trash!—how *can* a lady don it?
Yet heavier far than your Petrarchan stuff—
Owl-downy nonsense that the faintest puff
Twirls into trunk-paper the while you con it."
And, veritably, Sol is right enough.
The general tuckermanities are arrant
Bubbles—ephemeral and *so* transparent—
But *this* is, now,—you may depend upon it—
Stable, opaque, immortal—all by dint
Of the dear names that lie concealed within 't.

ANNABEL LEE.

IT was many and many a year ago,
In a kingdom by the sea,
That a maiden there lived whom you may know
By the name of ANNABEL LEE;
And this maiden she lived with no other thought
Than to love and be loved by me.

I was a child and *she* was a child,
In this kingdom by the sea:
But we loved with a love that was more than love—
I and my ANNABEL LEE;
With a love that the winged seraphs of heaven
Coveted her and me.

And this was the reason that, long ago,
In this kingdom by the sea,
A wind blew out of a cloud, chilling
My beautiful ANNABEL LEE;
So that her high-born kinsman came
And bore her away from me,
To shut her up in a sepulchre
In this kingdom by the sea.

The angels, not half so happy in heaven,
Went envying her and me—
Yes!—that was the reason (as all men know,
In this kingdom by the sea)
That the wind came out of the cloud by night,
Chilling and killing my ANNABEL LEE.

But our love it was stronger by far than the love
Of those who were older than we—
Of many far wiser than we—
And neither the angels in heaven above,
Nor the demons down under the sea,
Can ever dissever my soul from the soul
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE,

For the moon never beams, without bringing me dreams
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;
And the stars never rise, but I feel the bright eyes
Of the beautiful ANNABEL LEE ;
And so, all the night-tide, I lie down by the side
Of my darling—my darling—my life and my bride,
In the sepulchre there by the sea,
In her tomb by the sounding sea.

TO MY MOTHER.

BECAUSE I feel that, in the heavens above,
The angels, whispering to one another,
Can find, among their burning terms of love,
None so devotional as that of "Mother,"
Therefore by that dear name I long have called you,
You who are more than mother unto me,
And fill my heart of hearts, where Death installed you,
In setting my Virginia's spirit free.
My mother—my own mother, who died early,
Was but the mother of myself ; but you

Are mother to the one I loved so dearly,
And thus are dearer than the mother I knew
By that infinity with which my wife
Was dearer to my soul than its soul-life

THE HAUNTED PALACE.

IN the greenest of our valleys
By good angels tenanted,
Once a fair and stately palace—
Radiant palace—reared its head.
In the monarch Thought's dominion—
It stood there!
Never seraph spread a pinion
Over fabric half so fair!

Banners yellow, glorious, golden,
On its roof did float and flow,
(This—all this—was in the olden
Time long ago,)
And every gentle air that dallied,
In that sweet day,
Along the ramparts plumed and pallid,
A wingèd odor went away.

Wanderers in that happy valley,
Through two luminous windows, saw
Spirits moving musically,
To a lute's well-tunèd law,

Round about a throne where, sitting
(Porphyrogene !)
In state his glory well befitting,
The ruler of the realm was seen.

And all with pearl and ruby glowing
Was the fair palace-door,
Through which came flowing, flowing, flowing,
And sparkling evermore,
A troop of Echoes, whose sweet duty
Was but to sing,
In voices of surpassing beauty,
The wit and wisdom of their king.

But evil things, in robes of sorrow,
Assailed the monarch's high estate.
(Ah, let us mourn !—for never morrow
Shall dawn upon him desolate !)
And round about his home, the glory
That blushed and bloomed
Is but a dim-remembered story
Of the old time entombed.

And travellers now, within that valley,
Through the red-litten windows see
Vast forms, that move fantastically
To a discordant melody,
While, like a ghastly rapid river,
Through the pale door
A hideous throng rush out forever
And laugh—but smile no more.

THE CONQUEROR WORM.

LO! t' is a gala night
Within the lonesome latter years!
An angel throng, bewinged, bedight
In veils, and drowned in tears,
Sit in a theatre, to see
A play of hopes and fears,
While the orchestra breathes fitfully
The music of the spheres.

Mimes, in the form of God on high,
Mutter and mumble low,
And hither and thither fly—
Mere puppets they, who come and go
At bidding of vast formless things
That shift the scenery to and fro,
Flapping from out their Condor wings
Invisible Woe!

That motley drama—oh, be sure
It shall not be forgot!
With its Phantom chased for evermore,
By a crowd that seize it not,
Through a circle that ever returneth in
To the self-same spot,
And much of Madness, and more of Sin,
And Horror the soul of the plot.

But see, amid the mimic rout
A crawling shape intrude!

A blood-red thing that writhes from out
The scenic solitude!
It writhes!—it writhes!—with mortal pangs
The mimes become its food,
And the angels sob at vermin fangs
In human gore imbued.

Out—out are the lights—out all!
And, over each quivering form,
The curtain, a funeral pall,
Comes down with the rush of a storm,
And the angels, all pallid and wan,
Uprising, unveiling, affirm
That the play is the tragedy "Man,"
And its hero the Conqueror Worm.

TO F——S S. O——D.

THOU wouldst be loved?—then let thy heart
From its present pathway part not!
Being every thing which now thou art,
Be nothing which thou art not.
So with the world thy gentle ways,
Thy grace, thy more than beauty,
Shall be an endless theme of praise,
And love—a simple duty.

TO ONE IN PARADISE.

THOU wast that all to me, love,
For which my soul did pine—
A green isle in the sea, love,
A fountain and a shrine,
All wreathed with fairy fruits and flowers,
And all the flowers were mine.

Ah, dream too bright to last!
Ah, starry Hope! that didst arise
But to be overcast!
A voice from out the Future cries,
"On! on!"—but o'er the Past
(Dim gulf!) my spirit hovering lies
Mute, motionless, aghast!

For, alas! alas! with me
The light of Life is o'er!
"No more—no more—no more—"
(Such language holds the solemn sea
To the sands upon the shore)
Shall bloom the thunder-blasted tree,
Or the stricken eagle soar!

And all my days are trances,
And all my nightly dreams
Are where thy dark eye glances,
And where thy footstep gleams—
In what ethereal dances,
By what eternal streams.

THE VALLEY OF UNREST.

ONCE it smiled a silent dell
Where the people did not dwell;
They had gone unto the wars,
Trusting to the mild-eyed stars,
Nightly from their azure towers,
To keep watch above the flowers,
In the midst of which all day
The red sunlight lazily lay.
Now each visitor shall confess
The sad valley's restlessness.
Nothing there is motionless—
Nothing save the airs that brood
Over the magic solitude.
Ah, by no wind are stirred those trees
That palpitate like the chill seas
Around the misty Hebrides!
Ah, by no wind those clouds are driven
That rustle through the unquiet Heaven
Uneasily, from morn till even,
Over the violets there that lie
In myriad types of the human eye—
Over the lilies there that wave
And weep above a nameless grave!
They wave:—from out their fragrant tops
Eternal dews come down in drops.
They weep:—from off their delicate stems
Perennial tears descend in gems.

THE CITY IN THE SEA.

LO! Death has reared himself a throne
In a strange city lying alone
Far down within the dim West
Where the good and the bad and the worst and the best
Have gone to their eternal rest.
There shrines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours.
Around, by lifting winds forgot,
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.

No rays from the holy Heaven come down
On the long night-time of that town;
But light from out the lurid sea
Streams up the turrets silently—
Gleams up the pinnacles far and free—
Up domes—up spires—up kingly halls—
Up fanes—up Babylon-like walls—
Up shadowy long-forgotten bowers
Of sculptured ivy and stone flowers—
Up many and many a marvellous shrine
Whose wreathèd friezes intertwine
The viol, the violet, and the vine.
Resignedly beneath the sky
The melancholy waters lie.
So blend the turrets and shadows there
That all seem pendulous in air,

While from a proud tower in the town
Death looks gigantically down.

There open fanes and gaping graves
Yawn level with the luminous waves ;
But not the riches there that lie
In each idol's diamond eye—
Not the gayly-jewelled dead
Tempt the waters from their bed ;
For no ripples curl, alas !
Along that wilderness of glass—
No swellings tell that winds may be
Upon some far-off happier sea—
No heavings hint that winds have been
On seas less hideously serene.

But lo, a stir is in the air !
The wave—there is a movement there !
As if the towers had thrust aside,
In slightly sinking, the dull tide—
As if their tops had feebly given
A void within the filmy Heaven.
The waves have now a redder glow—
The hours are breathing faint and low—
And when, amid no earthly moans,
Down, down that town shall settle hence,
Hell, rising from a thousand thrones,
Shall do it reverence.

THE SLEEPER.

At midnight, in the month of June,
I stand beneath the mystic moon.
An opiate vapor, dewy, dim,
Exhales from out her golden rim,
And, softly dripping, drop by drop,
Upon the quiet mountain top,
Steals drowsily and musically
Into the universal valley.
The rosemary nods upon the grave;
The lily lolls upon the wave;
Wrapping the fog about its breast,
The ruin moulders into rest;
Looking like Lethe, see! the lake
A conscious slumber seems to take,
And would not, for the world, awake.
All Beauty sleeps!—and lo! where lies
(Her casement open to the skies)
Irene, with her Destinies!

Oh, lady bright! can it be right—
This window open to the night?
The wanton airs, from the tree-top,
Laughingly through the lattice drop—
The bodiless airs, a wizard rout,
Flit through thy chamber in and out,
And wave the curtain canopy
So fitfully—so fearfully—
Above the closed and fringed lid

'Neath which thy slumb'ring soul lies hid,
That, o'er the floor and down the wall,
Like ghosts the shadows rise and fall!
Oh, lady dear, hast thou no fear?
Why and what art thou dreaming here?
Sure thou art come o'er far-off seas,
A wonder to these garden trees!
Strange is thy pallor! strange thy dress!
Strange, above all, thy length of tress,
And this all solemn silentness!

The lady sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
Which is enduring, so be deep!
Heaven have her in its sacred keep!
This chamber changed for one more holy,
This bed for one more melancholy,
I pray to God that she may lie
Forever with unopened eye,
While the dim sheeted ghosts go by!

My love, she sleeps! Oh, may her sleep,
As it is lasting, so be deep!
Soft may the worms about her creep!
Far in the forest, dim and old,
For her may some tall vault unfold—
Some vault that oft hath flung its black
And winged panels fluttering back,
Triumphant, o'er the crested palls,
Of her grand family funerals—
Some sepulchre, remote, alone,

Against whose portal she hath thrown,
In childhood, many an idle stone—
Some tomb from out whose sounding door
She ne'er shall force an echo more,
Thrilling to think, poor child of sin!
It was the dead who groaned within.

SILENCE.

THERE are some qualities—some incorporate things,
That have a double life, which thus is made
A type of that twin entity which springs
From matter and light, evinced in solid and shade.
There is a twofold *Silence*—sea and shore—
Body and soul. One dwells in lonely places,
Newly with grass o'ergrown; some solemn graces,
Some human memories and tearful lore,
Render him terrorless: his name 's "No More."
He is the corporate Silence: dread him not!
No power hath he of evil in himself;
But should some urgent fate (untimely lot!)
Bring thee to meet his shadow (nameless elf,
That haunteth the lone regions where hath trod
No foot of man), commend thyself to God!

A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM.

TAKE this kiss upon the brow!
And, in parting from you now,
Thus much let me avow—
You are not wrong, who deem
That my days have been a dream;
Yet if hope has flown away
In a night, or in a day,
In a vision, or in none,
Is it therefore the less *gone?*
All that we see or seem
Is but a dream within a dream.

I stand amid the roar
Of a surf-tormented shore,
And I hold within my hand
Grains of the golden sand—
How few! yet how they creep
Through my fingers to the deep,
While I weep—while I weep!
O God! can I not grasp
Them with a tighter clasp?
O God! can I not save
One from the pitiless wave?
Is *all* that we see or seem
But a dream within a dream?

DREAM-LAND.

BY a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,
On a black throne reigns upright,
I have reached these lands but newly
From an ultimate dim Thule—
From a wild weird clime that lieth, sublime,
Out of SPACE—out of TIME.

Bottomless vales and boundless floods,
And chasms, and caves, and Titan woods,
With forms that no man can discover
For the dews that drip all over ;
Mountains toppling evermore
Into seas without a shore ;
Seas that restlessly aspire,
Surging, unto skies of fire ;
Lakes that endlessly outspread
Their lone waters—lone and dead,—
Their still waters—still and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily.

By the lakes that thus outspread
Their lone waters, lone and dead,—
Their sad waters, sad and chilly
With the snows of the lolling lily,—
By the mountains—near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever,—

By the gray woods,—by the swamp
Where the toad and the newt encamp,—
By the dismal tarns and pools
Where dwell the Ghouls,—
By each spot the most unholy—
In each nook most melancholy,—
There the traveller meets aghast
Sheeted Memories of the Past—
Shrouded forms that start and sigh
As they pass the wanderer by—
White-robed forms of friends long given,
In agony, to the Earth—and Heaven.

For the heart whose woes are legion
'T is a peaceful, soothing region—
For the spirit that walks in shadow
'T is—oh, 't is an Eldorado!
But the traveller, travelling through it,
May not—dare not openly view it;
Never its mysteries are exposed
To the weak human eye unclosed;
So wills its King, who hath forbid
The uplifting of the fringed lid;
And thus the sad Soul that here passes
Beholds it but through darkened glasses.

By a route obscure and lonely,
Haunted by ill angels only,
Where an Eidolon, named NIGHT,

On a black throne reigns upright,
I have wandered home but newly
From this ultimate dim Thule.

TO ZANTE.

FAIR isle, that from the fairest of all flowers
Thy gentlest of all gentle names dost take!
How many memories of what radiant hours
At sight of thee and thine at once awake!
How many scenes of what departed bliss!
How many thoughts of what entombèd hopes!
How many visions of a maiden that is
No more—no more upon thy verdant slopes!
No more! alas, that magical sad sound
Transforming all! Thy charms shall please *no more!*
Thy memory *no more!* Accursèd ground
Henceforth I hold thy flower-enamelled shore,
O hyacinthine isle! O purple Zante!
"Isola d'oro! Fior di Levante!"

EULALIE.

I DWELT alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide,
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing bride—
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my smiling bride.

An, less—less bright
The stars of night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl !
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl,
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded curl—
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble and careless curl.

Now Doubt—now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh,
And all day long
Shines, bright and strong,
Astarté within the sky,
While ever to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron eye—
While ever to her young Eulalie upturns her violet eye.

ELDORADO.

GAILY bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—

And o'er his heart a shadow
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
"Shadow," said he,
"Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?"

"Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,"
The shade replied,—
"If you seek for Eldorado!"

ISRAFEL.*

IN Heaven a spirit doth dwell
"Whose heart-strings are a lute";
None sing so wildly well
As the angel Israfel,
And the giddy stars (so legends tell)
Ceasing their hymns, attend the spell
Of his voice, all mute.

---

* And the angel Israfel, whose heart-strings are a lute, and who has the sweetest voice of all God's creatures.—KORAN.

Tottering above
In her highest noon,
The enamored moon
Blushes with love,
While, to listen, the red levin
(With the rapid Pleiads, even,
Which were seven)
Pauses in Heaven.

And they say (the starry choir
And the other listening things)
That Israfeli's fire
Is owing to that lyre
By which he sits and sings—
The trembling living wire
Of those unusual strings.

But the skies that angel trod,
Where deep thoughts are a duty—
Where Love 's a grown-up God—
Where the Houri glances are
Imbued with all the beauty
Which we worship in a star.

Therefore, thou art not wrong,
Israfeli, who despisest
An unimpassioned song;
To thee the laurels belong,
Best bard, because the wisest!
Merrily live, and long!

The ecstasies above
With thy burning measures suit—
Thy grief, thy joy, thy hate, thy love,
With the fervor of thy lute—
Well may the stars be mute!

Yes, Heaven is thine; but this
Is a world of sweets and sours;
Our flowers are merely—flowers,
And the shadow of thy perfect bliss
Is the sunshine of ours.

If I could dwell
Where Israfel
Hath dwelt, and he where I,
He might not sing so wildly well
A mortal melody,
While a bolder note than this might swell
From my lyre within the sky.

FOR ANNIE.

THANK Heaven! the crisis—
The danger is past,
And the lingering illness
Is over at last—
And the fever called "Living"
Is conquered at last.

Sadly I know
I am shorn of my strength,
And no muscle I move
As I lie at full length—
But no matter !—I feel
I am better at length.

And I rest so composed,
Now, in my bed,
That any beholder
Might fancy me dead—
Might start at beholding me,
Thinking me dead.

The moaning and groaning,
The sighing and sobbing,
Are quieted now,
With that horrible throbbing
At heart :—ah, that horrible,
Horrible throbbing !
The sickness—the nausea—
The pitiless pain—
Have ceased, with the fever
That maddened my brain—
With the fever called "Living"
That burned in my brain.

And oh ! of all tortures
That torture the worst
Has abated—the terrible
Torture of thirst

For the naphthaline river
  Of Passion accurst:—
I have drunk of a water
  That quenches all thirst:—

Of a water that flows,
  With a lullaby sound,
From a spring but a very few
  Feet under ground—
From a cavern not very far
  Down under ground.

And ah! let it never
  Be foolishly said
That my room it is gloomy
  And narrow my bed;
For man never slept
  In a different bed—
And, to *sleep*, you must slumber
  In just such a bed.

My tantalized spirit
  Here blandly reposes,
Forgetting, or never
  Regretting, its roses—
Its old agitations
  Of myrtles and roses:

For now, while so quietly
  Lying, it fancies

A holier odor
About it, of pansies—
A rosemary odor,
Commingled with pansies—
With rue and the beautiful
Puritan pansies.

And so it lies happily,
Bathing in many
A dream of the truth
And the beauty of Annie—
Drowned in a bath
Of the tresses of Annie.

She tenderly kissed me,
She fondly caressed,
And then I fell gently
To sleep on her breast—
Deeply to sleep
From the heaven of her breast.

When the light was extinguished
She covered me warm,
And she prayed to the angels
To keep me from harm—
To the queen of the angels
To shield me from harm.

And I lie so composedly,
Now in my bed,

(Knowing her love,)
That you fancy me dead—
And I rest so contentedly,
Now in my bed,
(With her love at my breast,)
That you fancy me dead—
That you shudder to look at me,
Thinking me dead :—

But my heart is brighter
Than all of the many
Stars in the sky,
For it sparkles with Annie—
It glows with the light
Of the love of my Annie—
With the thought of the light
Of the eyes of my Annie.

TO ——.

I HEED not that my earthly lot
Hath little of earth in it—
That years of love have been forgot
In the hatred of a minute :—
I mourn not that the desolate
Are happier, sweet, than I,
But that *you* sorrow for *my* fate
Who am a passer by.

BRIDAL BALLAD.

THE ring is on my hand,
And the wreath is on my brow;
Satins and jewels grand
Are all at my command,
And I am happy now.

And my lord he loves me well;
But when first he breathed his vow
I felt my bosom swell—
For the words rang as a knell,
And the voice seemed *his* who fell
In the battle down the dell,
And who is happy now.

But he spoke to reassure me,
And he kissed my pallid brow,
While a revery came o'er me,
And to the church-yard bore me,
And I sighed to him before me,
Thinking him dead D' Elormie,
"Oh, I am happy now!"

And thus the words were spoken,
And this the plighted vow,
And though my faith be broken,
And though my heart be broken,
Behold the golden token
That *proves* me happy now!

Would God I could awaken!
For I dream I know not how,
And my soul is sorely shaken
Lest an evil step be taken,—
Lest the dead who is forsaken
May not be happy now.

TO F——.

BELOVED! amid the earnest woes
That crowd around my earthly path—
(Drear path, alas! where grows
Not even one lonely rose)—
My soul at least a solace hath
In dreams of thee, and therein knows
An Eden of bland repose.

And thus thy memory is to me
Like some enchanted far-off isle
In some tumultuous sea—
Some ocean throbbing far and free
With storms—but where meanwhile
Serenest skies continually
Just o'er that one bright island smile.

SCENES FROM "POLITIAN";

AN UNPUBLISHED DRAMA.

I.

ROME.—A Hall in a Palace. Alessandra and Castiglione.

Alessandra. Thou art sad, Castiglione.

Castiglione. Sad!—not I.
Oh, I 'm the happiest, happiest man in Rome!
A few days more, thou knowest, my Alessandra,
Will make thee mine. Oh, I am very happy!

Aless. Methinks thou hast a singular way of showing
Thy happiness!—what ails thee, cousin of mine?
Why didst thou sigh so deeply?

Cas. Did I sigh?
I was not conscious of it. It is a fashion,
A silly—a most silly fashion I have
When I am *very* happy. Did I sigh? (*Sighing.*)

Aless. Thou didst. Thou art not well. Thou hast indulged
Too much of late, and I am vexed to see it.
Late hours and wine, Castiglione,—these
Will ruin thee! thou art already altered—
Thy looks are haggard—nothing so wears away
The constitution as late hours and wine.

Cas. (*Musing.*) Nothing, fair cousin, nothing—not even deep sorrow—
Wears it away like evil hours and wine.
I will amend.

Aless. Do it! I would have thee drop
Thy riotous company, too—fellows low born—

Ill suit the like with old Di Broglio's heir
And Alessandra's husband.

Cas. I will drop them.

Aless. Thou wilt—thou must. Attend thou also more
To thy dress and equipage—they are over plain
For thy lofty rank and fashion—much depends
Upon appearances.

Cas. I 'll see to it.

Aless. Then see to it !—pay more attention, sir,
To a becoming carriage—much thou wantest
In dignity.

Cas. Much, much, oh, much I want
In proper dignity.

Aless. (*Haughtily.*) Thou mockest me, sir !

Cas. (*Abstractedly.*) Sweet, gentle Lalage !

Aless. Heard I aright ?
I speak to him—he speaks of Lalage !
Sir Count ! (*Places her hand on his shoulder.*) What art thou
dreaming ? he 's not well !
What ails thee, sir ?

Cas. (*Starting.*) Cousin ! fair cousin !—madam !
I crave thy pardon—indeed I am not well—
Your hand from off my shoulder, if you please.
This air is most oppressive !—Madam—the Duke !

Enter Di Broglio.

Di Broglio. My son, I 've news for thee !—hey ?—what 's
the matter ? (*Observing Alessandra.*)
I' the pouts ? Kiss her, Castiglione ! kiss her,
You dog ! and make it up, I say, this minute !

I've news for you both. Politian is expected
Hourly in Rome—Politian, Earl of Leicester!
We 'll have him at the wedding. 'T is his first visit
To the imperial city.

Aless. What! Politian
Of Britain, Earl of Leicester?

Di Brog. The same, my love.
We 'll have him at the wedding. A man quite young
In years, but gray in fame. I have not seen him,
But Rumor speaks of him as of a prodigy
Pre-eminent in arts, and arms, and wealth,
And high descent. We 'll have him at the wedding.

Aless. I have heard much of this Politian.
Gay, volatile, and giddy—is he not?
And little given to thinking.

Di Brog. Far from it, love.
No branch, they say, of all philosophy
So deep abstruse he has not mastered it.
Learned as few are learned.

Aless. 'T is very strange!
I have known men have seen Politian
And sought his company. They speak of him
As of one who entered madly into life,
Drinking the cup of pleasure to the dregs.

Cas. Ridiculous! Now *I* have seen Politian
And know him well—nor learned nor mirthful he.
He is a dreamer and a man shut out
From common passions.

Di Brog. Children, we disagree.

Let us go forth and taste the fragrant air
Of the garden. Did I dream, or did I hear
Politian was a *melancholy* man? (*Exeunt.*)

II.

ROME. A Lady's apartment, with a window open and looking into a garden. Lalage, in deep mourning, reading at a table on which lie some books and a hand mirror. In the background Jacinta (a servant maid) leans carelessly upon a chair.

Lalage. Jacinta! is it thou?

Jacinta. (*Pertly.*) Yes, ma'am, I 'm here.

Lal. I did not know, Jacinta, you were in waiting.
Sit down!—let not my presence trouble you—
Sit down!—for I am humble, most humble.

Jac. (*Aside.*) 'T is time.

(*Jacinta seats herself in a side-long manner upon the chair, resting her elbows upon the back, and regarding her mistress with a contemptuous look. Lalage continues to read.*)

Lal. "It in another climate, so he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not i' this soil!"

(*Pauses—turns over some leaves, and resumes.*)

"No lingering winters there, nor snow, nor shower—
But Ocean ever to refresh mankind
Breathes the shrill spirit of the western wind."
Oh, beautiful!—most beautiful!—how like
To what my fevered soul doth dream of heaven!
O happy land! (*Pauses.*) She died!—the maiden died!
O still more happy maiden who couldst die!
Jacinta!

(*Jacinta returns no answer, and Lalage presently resumes.*)

Again !—a similar tale
Told of a beauteous dame beyond the sea !
Thus speaketh one Ferdinand in the words of the play—
"She died full young"—one Bossola answers him—
"I think not so—her infelicity
Seemed to have years too many."—Ah, luckless lady !
Jacinta ! (*Still no answer.*)
Here 's a far sterner story,
But like—oh, very like in its despair—
Of that Egyptian queen, winning so easily
A thousand hearts—losing at length her own.
She died. Thus endeth the history—and her maids
Lean over her and weep—two gentle maids
With gentle names—Eiros and Charmion !
Rainbow and Dove !——Jacinta !

Jac. (*Pettishly.*) Madam, what *is* it ?

Lal. Wilt thou, my good Jacinta, be so kind
As go down in the library and bring me
The Holy Evangelists.

Jac. Pshaw ! (*Exit.*)

Lal. If there be balm
For the wounded spirit in Gilead it is there !
Dew in the night-time of my bitter trouble
Will there be found—"dew sweeter far than that
Which hangs like chains of pearl on Hermon Hill."

(*Re-enter Jacinta, and throws a volume on the table.*)

There, ma'am, 's the book. Indeed she is very troublesome.
(*Aside.*)

Lal. (*Astonished.*) What didst thou say, Jacinta? Have I done aught
To grieve thee or to vex thee?—I am sorry.
For thou hast served me long and ever been
Trustworthy and respectful. (*Resumes her reading.*)

Jac. I can't believe
She has any more jewels—no—no—she gave me all. (*Aside.*)

Lal. What didst thou say, Jacinta? Now I bethink me
Thou hast not spoken lately of thy wedding.
How fares good Ugo?—and when is it to be?
Can I do aught?—is there no farther aid
Thou needest, Jacinta?

Jac. Is there no *farther* aid!
That 's meant for me. (*Aside.*) I 'm sure, Madam, you need not
Be always throwing those jewels in my teeth.

Lal. Jewels? Jacinta,—now indeed, Jacinta,
I thought not of the jewels.

Jac. Oh! perhaps not!
But then I might have sworn it. After all,
There 's Ugo says the ring is only paste,
For he 's sure the Count Castiglione never
Would have given a real diamond to such as you;
And at the best I 'm certain, madam, you cannot
Have use for jewels *now*. But I might have sworn it. (*Exit.*)

(*Lalage bursts into tears and leans her head upon the table—after a short pause raises it.*)

Lal. Poor Lalage!—and is it come to this?
Thy servant maid!—but courage!—'t is but a viper
Whom thou hast cherished to sting thee to the soul!
(*Taking up the mirror.*)

Ha! here at least's a friend—too much a friend
In earlier days—a friend will not deceive thee.
Fair mirror and true! now tell me (for thou canst)
A tale—a pretty tale—and heed thou not
Though it be rife with woe. It answers me.
It speaks of sunken eyes, and wasted cheeks,
And Beauty long deceased—remembers me
Of Joy departed—Hope, the Seraph Hope,
Inurned and entombed!—now, in a tone
Low, sad, and solemn, but most audible,
Whispers of early grave untimely yawning
For ruined maid. Fair mirror and true!—thou liest not!
Thou hast no end to gain—no heart to break—
Castiglione lied who said he loved——
Thou true—he false!—false!—false!

(*While she speaks, a monk enters her apartment, and approaches unobserved.*)

Monk. Refuge thou hast,
Sweet daughter! in Heaven. Think of eternal things!
Give up thy soul to penitence, and pray!

Lal. (*Arising hurriedly.*) I cannot pray!—My soul is at war with God!
The frightful sounds of merriment below
Disturb my senses—go! I cannot pray—
The sweet airs from the garden worry me!
Thy presence grieves me—go!—thy priestly raiment
Fills me with dread—thy ebony crucifix
With horror and awe!

Monk. Think of thy precious soul!

Lal. Think of my early days !—think of my father
And mother in Heaven ! think of our quiet home,
And the rivulet that ran before the door !
Think of my little sisters !—think of them !
And think of me !—think of my trusting love
And confidence—his vows—my ruin—think—think
Of my unspeakable misery !——begone !
Yet stay ! yet stay !—what was it thou saidst of prayer
And penitence ? Didst thou not speak of faith
And vows before the throne ?

Monk. I did.

Lal. 'T is well.
There *is* a vow were fitting should be made—
A sacred vow, imperative and urgent,
A solemn vow !

Monk. Daughter, this zeal is well !

Lal. Father this zeal is any thing but well !
Hast thou a crucifix fit for this thing !
A crucifix whereon to register
This sacred vow ? (*He hands her his own.*)
Not that—oh ! no !—no !—no ! (*Shuddering.*)
Not that ! Not that !—I tell thee, holy man,
Thy raiments and thy ebony cross affright me !
Stand back ! I have a crucifix myself,—
I have a crucifix ! Methinks 't were fitting
The deed—the vow—the symbol of the deed—
And the deed's register should tally, father !
(*Draws a cross-handled dagger and raises it on high.*)
Behold the cross wherewith a vow like mine

Is written in Heaven!

Monk. Thy words are madness, daughter,
And speak a purpose unholy—thy lips are livid—
Thine eyes are wild—tempt not the wrath divine!
Pause ere too late!—oh, be not—be not rash!
Swear not the oath—oh, swear it not!

Lal. 'T is sworn!

III.

An apartment in a palace. Politian and Baldazzar.

Baldazzar. Arouse thee now, Politian!
Thou must not—nay, indeed, indeed, thou shalt not
Give way unto these humors. Be thyself!
Shake off the idle fancies that beset thee,
And live, for now thou diest!

Politian. Not so, Baldazzar!
Surely I live.

Bal. Politian, it doth grieve me
To see thee thus.

Pol. Baldazzar, it doth grieve me
To give thee cause for grief, my honored friend.
Command me, sir! what wouldst thou have me do?
At thy behest I will shake off that nature
Which from my forefathers I did inherit,
Which with my mother's milk I did imbibe,
And be no more Politian, but some other.
Command me, sir!

Bal. To the field then—to the field—
To the senate or the field.

Pol. Alas ! alas !
There is an imp would follow me even there !
There is an imp *hath* followed me even there !
There is——what voice was that ?
Bal. I heard it not.
I heard not any voice except thine own,
And the echo of thine own.
Pol. Then I but dreamed.
Bal. Give not thy soul to dreams : the camp—the court
Befit thee—Fame awaits thee—Glory calls—
And her the trumpet-tongued thou wilt not hear
In hearkening to imaginary sounds
And phantom voices.
Pol. It *is* a phantom voice !
Did thou not hear it *then?*
Bal. I heard it not.
Pol. Thou heardst it not !——Baldazzar, speak no more
To me, Politian, of thy camps and courts.
Oh ! I am sick, sick, sick, even unto death,
Of the hollow and high-sounding vanities
Of the populous Earth ! Bear with me yet a while !
We have been boys together—school-fellows—
And now are friends—yet shall not be so long—
For in the eternal city thou shalt do me
A kind and gentle office, and a Power—
A Power august, benignant, and supreme—
Shall then absolve thee of all farther duties
Unto thy friend.
Bal. Thou speakest a fearful riddle

I *will* not understand.

Pol. Yet now as Fate
Approaches, and the Hours are breathing low,
The sands of Time are changed to golden grains,
And dazzle me, Baldazzar. Alas! alas!
I *cannot* die, having within my heart
So keen a relish for the beautiful
As has been kindled within it. Methinks the air
Is balmier now than it was wont to be—
Rich melodies are floating in the winds—
A rarer loveliness bedecks the earth—
And with a holier lustre the quiet moon
Sitteth in heaven.—Hist! hist! thou canst not say
Thou hearest not *now*, Baldazzar?

Bal. Indeed I hear not.

Pol. Not hear it!—listen now—listen!—the faintest sound
And yet the sweetest that ear ever heard!
A lady's voice!—and sorrow in the tone!
Baldazzar, it oppresses me like a spell!
Again!—again!—how solemnly it falls
Into my heart of hearts! that eloquent voice
Surely I never heard—yet it were well
Had I *but* heard it with its thrilling tones
In earlier days!

Bal. I myself hear it now.
Be still!—the voice, if I mistake not greatly,
Proceeds from yonder lattice—which you may see
Very plainly through the window—it belongs,
Does it not? unto this palace of the Duke.

The singer is undoubtedly beneath
The roof of his Excellency—and perhaps
Is even that Alessandra of whom he spoke
As the betrothed of Castiglione,
His son and heir.

Pol. Be still !—it comes again !

Voice (*very faintly.*)
"And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long
In wealth and woe among ?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus ?
Say nay—say nay !"

Bal. The song is English, and I oft have heard it
In merry England—never so plaintively—
Hist ! hist ! it comes again !

Voice (*more loudly.*)
"Is it so strong
As for to leave me thus
Who hath loved thee so long,
In wealth and woe among ?
And is thy heart so strong
As for to leave me thus ?
Say nay—say nay !"

Bal. 'T is hushed and all is still !

Pol. All is *not* still.

Bal. Let us go down.

Pol. Go down, Baldazzar, go !

Bal. The hour is growing late—the Duke awaits us,—
Thy presence is expected in the hall

Below. What ails thee, Earl Politian?

Voice (*distinctly.*) "Who hath loved thee so long,
In wealth and woe among,
And is thy heart so strong?
Say nay—say nay!"

Bal. Let us descend!—'t is time. Politian, give
These fancies to the wind. Remember, pray,
Your bearing lately savored much of rudeness
Unto the Duke. Arouse thee! and remember!

Pol. Remember? I do. Lead on! I *do* remember.
(*Going.*)
Let us descend. Believe me, I would give,
Freely would give, the broad lands of my earldom
To look upon the face hidden by yon lattice—
"To gaze upon that veiled face, and hear
Once more that silent tongue."

Bal. Let me beg you, sir,
Descend with me—the Duke may be offended.
Let us go down, I pray you.
(*Voice loudly.*) Say nay!—say nay!

Pol. (*Aside.*) 'T is strange!—'t is very strange—methought
the voice
Chimed in with my desires and bade me stay!
(*Approaching the window.*)
Sweet voice! I heed thee, and will surely stay.
Now be this Fancy, by Heaven, or be it Fate,
Still will I not descend. Baldazzar, make
Apology unto the Duke for me;
I go not down to-night.

Bal. Your lordship's pleasure
Shall be attended to. Good-night, Politian.
Pol. Good-night, my friend, good-night.

IV.

The gardens of a palace—Moonlight. Lalage and Politian.

Lalage. And dost thou speak of love
To *me*, Politian?—dost thou speak of love
To Lalage?—ah, woe!—ah, woe is me!
This mockery is most cruel—most cruel indeed!
Politian. Weep not! oh, sob not thus!—thy bitter tears
Will madden me. Oh, mourn not, Lalage—
Be comforted! I know—I know it all,
And *still* I speak of love. Look at me, brightest,
And beautiful Lalage!—turn here thine eyes!
Thou askest me if I could speak of love,
Knowing what I know, and seeing what I have seen.
Thou askest me that—and thus I answer thee—
Thus on my bended knee I answer thee. (*Kneeling.*)
Sweet Lalage, *I love thee—love thee—love thee;*
Thro' good and ill—thro' weal and woe I *love thee.*
Not mother, with her first-born on her knee,
Thrills with intenser love than I for thee.
Not on God's altar, in any time or clime,
Burned there a holier fire than burneth now
Within my spirit for *thee.* And do I love? (*Arising.*)
Even for thy woes I love thee—even for thy woes—
Thy beauty and thy woes.
Lal. Alas, proud Earl,

Thou dost forget thyself, remembering me!
How, in thy father's halls, among the maidens
Pure and reproachless of thy princely line,
Could the dishonored Lalage abide?
Thy wife, and with a tainted memory—
My seared and blighted name, how would it tally
With the ancestral honors of thy house,
And with thy glory?

Pol. Speak not to me of glory!
I hate—I loathe the name! I do abhor
The unsatisfactory and ideal thing.
Art thou not Lalage and I Politian?
Do I not love—art thou not beautiful—
What need we more? Ha! glory!—now speak not of it.
By all I hold most sacred and most solemn—
By all my wishes now—my fears hereafter—
By all I scorn on earth and hope in heaven—
There is no deed I would more glory in,
Than in thy cause to scoff at this same glory
And trample it under foot. What matters it—
What matters it, my fairest, and my best,
That we go down unhonored and forgotten
Into the dust—so we descend together?
Descend together—and then—and then perchance——

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And then perchance
Arise together, Lalage, and roam
The starry and quiet dwellings of the blest,
And still——

Lal. Why dost thou pause, Politian?

Pol. And still *together—together*.

Lal. Now, Earl of Leicester!
Thou *lovest* me, and in my heart of hearts
I feel thou lovest me truly.

Pol. Oh, Lalage! (*Throwing himself upon his knee.*)
And lovest thou *me?*

Lal. Hist! hush! within the gloom
Of yonder trees methought a figure past—
A spectral figure, solemn, and slow, and noiseless—
Like the grim shadow Conscience, solemn and noiseless.
(*Walks across and returns.*)
I was mistaken—'t was but a giant bough
Stirred by the autumn wind. Politian!

Pol. My Lalage—my love! why art thou moved?
Why dost thou turn so pale? Not Conscience' self,
Far less a shadow which thou likenest to it,
Should shake the firm spirit thus. But the night wind
Is chilly—and these melancholy boughs
Throw over all things a gloom.

Lal. Politian!
Thou speakest to me of love. Knowest thou the land
With which all tongues are busy—a land new found—
Miraculously found by one of Genoa—
A thousand leagues within the golden west?
A fairy land of flowers, and fruit, and sunshine,
And crystal lakes, and over-arching forests,
And mountains, around whose towering summits the winds
Of Heaven untrammelled flow—which air to breathe

Is Happiness now, and will be Freedom hereafter
In days that are to come?

Pol. Oh, wilt thou—wilt thou
Fly to that Paradise—my Lalage, wilt thou
Fly thither with me? There Care shall be forgotten,
And Sorrow shall be no more, and Eros be all.
And life shall then be mine, for I will live
For thee, and in thine eyes—and thou shalt be
No more a mourner—but the radiant Joys
Shall wait upon thee, and the angel Hope
Attend thee ever; and I will kneel to thee,
And worship thee, and call thee my beloved,
My all;—oh, wilt thou—wilt thou, Lalage,
Fly thither with me?

Lal. A deed is to be done—
Castiglione lives!

Pol. And he shall die. (*Exit.*)

Lal. (*After a pause.*) And—he—shall—die?———alas!
Castiglione die? Who spoke the words?
Where am I?—what was it he said?—Politian!
Thou *art* not gone—thou art not *gone*, Politian!
I *feel* thou art not gone—yet dare not look,
Lest I behold thee not; thou *couldst* not go
With those words upon thy lips—oh, speak to me!
And let me hear thy voice—one word—one word,
To say thou art not gone,—one little sentence,
To say how thou dost scorn—how thou dost hate
My womanly weakness. Ha! ha! thou *art* not gone—
Oh, speak to me! I *knew* thou wouldst not go!

I knew thou wouldst not, couldst not, *durst* not go.
Villain, thou *art* not gone—thou mockest me!
And thus I clutch thee—thus!———He is gone, he is gone—
Gone—gone. Where am I?——'t is well—'t is very well!
So that the blade be keen—the blow be sure,
'T is well, 't is *very* well—alas! alas!

V.

The suburbs. Politian alone.

Politian. This weakness grows upon me. I am faint,
And much I fear me ill—it will not do
To die ere I have lived!—Stay—stay thy hand,
O Azrael, yet awhile!—Prince of the Powers
Of Darkness and the Tomb, O pity me!
O pity me! let me not perish now,
In the budding of my Paradisal Hope!
Give me to live yet—yet a little while:
'T is I who pray for life—I who so late
Demanded but to die!—what sayeth the Count?

Enter Baldazzar.

Baldazzar. That, knowing no cause of quarrel or of feud
Between the Earl Politian and himself,
He doth decline your cartel.

Pol. *What* didst thou say?
What answer was it you brought me, good Baldazzar?
With what excessive fragrance the zephyr comes
Laden from yonder bowers!—a fairer day,
Or one more worthy Italy, methinks
No mortal eyes have seen!—*what* said the Count?

Bal. That he, Castiglione, not being aware
Of any feud existing, or any cause
Of quarrel between your lordship and himself,
Cannot accept the challenge.

Pol. It is most true—
All this is very true. When saw you, sir,
When saw you now, Baldazzar, in the frigid
Ungenial Britain which we left so lately,
A heaven so calm as this—so utterly free
From the evil taint of clouds?—and he did *say?*

Bal. No more, my lord, than I have told you, sir:
The Count Castiglione will not fight,
Having no cause for quarrel.

Pol. Now this is true—
All very true. Thou art my friend, Baldazzar,
And I have not forgotten it—thou 'lt do me
A piece of service; wilt thou go back and say
Unto this man, that I, the Earl of Leicester,
Hold him a villain?—thus much, I prythee, say
Unto the Count—it is exceeding just
He should have cause for quarrel.

Bal. My lord!—my friend!———

Pol. (*Aside.*) 'T is he—he comes himself! (*Aloud.*) Thou reasonest well.
I know what thou wouldst say—not send the message—
Well!—I will think of it—I will not send it.
Now prythee, leave me—hither doth come a person
With whom affairs of a most private nature
I would adjust.

Bal. I go—to-morrow we meet,
Do we not?—at the Vatican.

Pol. At the Vatican.

Enter Castiglione.

Cas. The Earl of Leicester here!

Pol. I *am* the Earl of Leicester, and thou seest,
Dost thou not? that I am here.

Cas. My lord, some strange,
Some singular mistake—misunderstanding—
Hath without doubt arisen: thou hast been urged
Thereby, in heat of anger, to address
Some words most unaccountable, in writing,
To me, Castiglione; the bearer being
Baldazzar, Duke of Surrey. I am aware
Of nothing which might warrant thee in this thing,
Having given thee no offence. Ha!—am I right?
'T was a mistake?—undoubtedly—we all
Do err at times.

Pol. Draw, villain, and prate no more!

Cas. Ha!—draw?—and villain? have at thee then at once,
Proud Earl!

Pol. (*Drawing.*) Thus to the expiatory tomb,
Untimely sepulchre, I do devote thee
In the name of Lalage!

Cas. (*Letting fall his sword and recoiling to the extremity of the stage.*)

Of Lalage!
Hold off—thy sacred hand!—avaunt I say!
Avaunt—I will not fight thee—indeed I dare not.

Pol. Thou wilt not fight with me, didst say, Sir Count?
Shall I be baffled thus?—now this is well:
Didst say thou *darest* not? Ha!

Cas. I dare not—dare not—
Hold off thy hand—with that beloved name
So fresh upon thy lips I will not fight thee—
I cannot—dare not.

Pol. Now by my halidom
I do believe thee! coward, I do believe thee!

Cas. Ha! coward! this may not be!

(*Clutches his sword and staggers toward Politian, but his purpose is changed before reaching him, and he falls upon his knee at the feet of the Earl.*)

Alas! my lord,
It is—it is—most true. In such a cause
I am the veriest coward. Oh, pity me!

Pol (*Greatly softened.*) Alas! I do—indeed I pity thee.

Cas. And Lalage———

Pol. Scoundrel!—arise and die!

Cas. It needeth not be—thus—thus—Oh, let me die
Thus on my bended knee! It were most fitting
That in this deep humiliation I perish.
For in the fight I will not raise a hand
Against thee, Earl of Leicester. Strike thou home—

(*Baring his bosom.*)

Here is no let or hindrance to thy weapon—
Strike home. I *will not* fight thee.

Pol. Now s'Death and Hell!
Am I not—am I not sorely—grievously tempted

To take thee at thy word? But mark me, sir:
Think not to fly me thus. Do thou prepare
For public insults in the streets—before
The eyes of the citizens. I 'll follow thee—
Like an avenging spirit I 'll follow thee
Even unto death. Before those whom thou lovest—
Before all Rome I 'll taunt thee, villain,—I 'll taunt thee,
Dost hear? with *cowardice*—thou *wilt not* fight me?
Thou liest! thou *shalt!* (*Exit.*)

Cas. Now this indeed is just!
Most righteous, and most just, avenging Heaven!

POEMS WRITTEN IN YOUTH.*

SONNET—TO SCIENCE.

SCIENCE ! true daughter of Old Time thou art !
Who alterest all things with thy peering eyes.
Why preyest thou thus upon the poet's heart,
Vulture, whose wings are dull realities ?
How should he love thee ? or how deem thee wise ?
Who wouldst not leave him in his wandering
To seek for treasure in the jewelled skies,
Albeit he soared with an undaunted wing ?
Hast thou not dragged Diana from her car ?
And driven the Hamadryad from the wood
To seek a shelter in some happier star ?
Hast thou not torn the Naiad from her flood,
The Elfin from the green grass, and from me
The summer dream beneath the tamarind tree ?

* Private reasons—some of which have reference to the sin of plagiarism, and others to the date of Tennyson's first poems—have induced me, after some hesitation, to republish these, the crude compositions of my earliest boyhood. They are printed *verbatim*, without alteration from the original edition, the date of which is too remote to be judiciously acknowledged.

E. A. P.

AL AARAAF.*

PART I.

OH ! nothing earthly save the ray
(Thrown back from flowers) of Beauty's eye,
As in those gardens where the day
Springs from the gems of Circassy—
Oh ! nothing earthly save the thrill
Of melody in woodland rill ;
Or (music of the passion-hearted)
Joy's voice so peacefully departed
That, like the murmur in the shell,
Its echo dwelleth and will dwell—
Oh ! nothing of the dross of ours,
Yet all the beauty, all the flowers,
That list our Love, and deck our bowers—
Adorn yon world afar, afar—
The wandering star.

'T was a sweet time for Nesace—for there
Her world lay lolling on the golden air,
Near four bright suns—a temporary rest—
An oasis in desert of the blest.
Away—away—'mid seas of rays that roll
Empyrean splendor o'er th' unchained soul—
The soul that scarce (the billows are so dense)
Can struggle to its destin'd eminence—

* A star was discovered by Tycho Brahe, which appeared suddenly in the heavens, attained in a few days a brilliancy surpassing that of Jupiter, then as suddenly disappeared, and has never been seen since.

To distant spheres, from time to time, she rode.
And late to ours, the favor'd one of God—
But, now, the ruler of an anchor'd realm,
She throws aside the sceptre—leaves the helm,
And, amid incense and high spiritual hymns,
Laves in quadruple light her angel limbs.

Now happiest, loveliest in yon lovely Earth,
Whence sprang the " Idea of Beauty " into birth
(Falling in wreaths thro' many a startled star,
Like woman's hair 'mid pearls, until, afar,
It lit on hills Achaian, and there dwelt) ?
She look'd into Infinity—and knelt.
Rich clouds, for canopies, about her curled—
Fit emblems of the model of her world—
Seen but in beauty—not impeding sight
Of other beauty glittering thro' the light—
A wreath that twined each starry form around,
And all the opal'd air in color bound.

All hurriedly she knelt upon a bed
Of flowers : of lilies such as rear'd the head
*On the fair Capo Deucato, and sprang
So eagerly around about to hang
Upon the flying footsteps of——deep pride—
†Of her who lov'd a mortal—and so died.
The Sephalica, budding with young bees,
Uprear'd its purple stem around her knees.

* On Santa Maura—olim Deucadia.
† Sappho.

*And gemmy flower, of Trebizond misnam'd—
Inmate of highest stars, where erst it sham'd
All other loveliness: its honied dew
(The fabled nectar that the heathen knew),
Deliriously sweet, was dropp'd from Heaven,
And fell on gardens of the unforgiven
In Trebizond—and on a sunny flower
So like its own above that, to this hour,
It still remaineth, torturing the bee
With madness, and unwonted reverie:
In Heaven, and all its environs, the leaf
And blossom of the fairy plant, in grief
Disconsolate linger—grief that hangs her head,
Repenting follies that full long have fled,
Heaving her white breast to the balmy air,
Like guilty beauty, chasten'd, and more fair:
Nyctanthes too, as sacred as the light
She fears to perfume, perfuming the night:
†And Clytia pondering between many a sun,
While pettish tears adown her petals run:
‡And that aspiring flower that sprang on Earth—

* This flower is much noticed by Lewenhoeck and Tournefort. The bee feeding upon its blossom becomes intoxicated.

† Clytia—The Chrysanthemum Peruvianum, or, to employ a better-known term, the turnsol—which turns continually toward the sun, covers itself, like Peru, the country from which it comes, with dewy clouds which cool and refresh its flowers during the most violent heat of the day.—*B. de St. Pierre.*

‡ There is cultivated in the king's garden at Paris, a species of serpentine aloes without prickles, whose large and beautiful flower exhales a strong odor of the vanilla, during the time of its expansion, which is very short. It does not blow till toward the month of July—you then perceive it gradually open its petals—expand them—fade and die—*St. Pierre.*

And died, ere scarce exalted into birth,
Bursting its odorus heart in spirit to wing
Its way to Heaven, from garden of a king:
* And Valisnerian lotus thither flown
From struggling with the waters of the Rhone:
† And thy most lovely purple perfume, Zante!
Isola d' oro!—Fior di Levante!
‡ And the Nelumbo bud that floats forever
With Indian Cupid down the holy river—
Fair flowers, and fairy! to whose care is given
§ To bear the Goddess' song, in odors, up to Heaven:

"Spirit! that dwellest where,
In the deep sky,
The terrible and fair
In beauty vie!
Beyond the line of blue—
The boundary of the star
Which turneth at the view
Of thy barrier and thy bar—
Of the barrier overgone
By the comets who were cast
From their pride and from their throne
To be drudges till the last—

* There is found, in the Rhone, a beautiful lily of the Valisnerian kind. Its stem will stretch to the length of three or four feet, thus preserving its head above water in the swellings of the river.

† The Hyacinth.

‡ It is a fiction of the Indians that Cupid was first seen floating in one of these down the river Ganges, and that he loves the cradle of his childhood.

§ And golden vials full of odors, which are the prayers of the saints. —*Rev. St. John.*

To be carriers of fire
(The red fire of their heart)
With speed that may not tire
And with pain that shall not part—
Who livest—*that* we know—
In Eternity—we feel—
But the shadow of whose brow
What spirit shall reveal?
Tho' the beings whom thy Nesace,
Thy messenger hath known
Have dream'd for thy Infinity
* A model of their own—
Thy will is done, oh, God!
The star hath ridden high

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* The Humanitarians held that God was to be understood as having really a human form.—*Vide Clarke's Sermons*, vol. i., page 26, fol. edit.

The drift of Milton's argument leads him to employ language which would appear, at first sight, to verge upon their doctrine; but it will be seen immediately that he guards himself against the charge of having adopted one of the most ignorant errors of the dark ages of the church. —*Dr. Sumner's Notes on Milton's Christian Doctrine.*

This opinion, in spite of many testimonies to the contrary, could never have been very general. Andeus, a Syrian of Mesopotamia, was condemned for the opinion as heretical. He lived in the beginning of the fourth century. His disciples were called Anthropmorphites.—*Vide Du Pin.*

Among Milton's minor poems are these lines:

Dicite sacrorum præsides nemorum Deæ, &c.
Quis ille primus cujus ex imagine
Natura solers finxit humanum genus?
Eternus, incorruptus, æquævus polo,
Unusque et universus exemplar Dei.

And afterward:

Non cui profundum Cæcitas lumen dedit
Dircæus augur vidit hunc alto sinu, &c.

Thro' many a tempest, but she rode
Beneath thy burning eye ;
And here, in thought, to thee—
In thought that can alone
Ascend thy empire, and so be
A partner of thy throne—
* By winged Fantasy,
My embassy is given,
Till secrecy shall knowledge be
In the environs of Heaven."

She ceas'd—and buried then her burning cheek
Abash'd, amid the lilies there, to seek
A shelter from the fervor of His eye ;
For the stars trembled at the Deity.
She stirr'd not—breath'd not—for a voice was there
How solemnly pervading the calm air !
A sound of silence on the startled ear
Which dreamy poets name " the music of the sphere."
Ours is a world of words : Quiet we call
" Silence "—which is the merest word of all.
All Nature speaks, and ev'n ideal things
Flap shadowy sounds from visionary wings—
But ah ! not so when, thus, in realms on high
The eternal voice of God is passing by,
And the red winds are withering in the sky !

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* Seltsumen Tochter Jovis
Seinem Schosskinde
Der Phantasie.—*Göethe.*

* "What tho' in worlds which sightless cycles run,
Link'd to a little system, and one sun—
Where all my love is folly and the crowd
Still think my terrors but the thunder cloud,
The storm, the earthquake, and the ocean-wrath—
(Ah! will they cross me in my angrier path?)
What tho' in worlds which own a single sun
The sands of Time grow dimmer as they run,
Yet thine is my resplendency, so given
To bear my secrets thro' the upper Heaven.
Leave tenantless thy crystal home, and fly,
With all thy train, athwart the moony sky—
† Apart—like fire-flies in Sicilian night,
And wing to other worlds another light!
Divulge the secrets of thy embassy
To the proud orbs that twinkle—and so be
To ev'ry heart a barrier and a ban
Lest the stars totter in the guilt of man!"

Up rose the maiden in the yellow night,
The single-mooned eve!—on Earth we plight
Our faith to one love—and one moon adore—
The birth-place of young Beauty had no more.
As sprang that yellow star from downy hours
Up rose the maiden from her shrine of flowers,
And bent o'er sheeny mountain and dim plain
‡ Her way—but left not yet her Therasæan reign

* Sightless—too small to be seen.—*Legge.*

† I have often noticed a peculiar movement of the fire-flies;—they will collect in a body and fly off, from a common centre, into innumerable radii,

‡ Therasæa, or Therasea, the island mentioned by Seneca, which, in a moment, arose from the sea to the eyes of astonished mariners.

PART II.

HIGH on a mountain of enamell'd head—
Such as the drowsy shepherd on his bed
Of giant pasturage lying at his ease,
Raising his heavy eyelid, starts and sees
With many a mutter'd "hope to be forgiven"
What time the moon is quadrated in Heaven—
Of rosy head, that towering far away
Into the sunlit ether, caught the ray
Of sunken suns at eve—at noon of night,
While the moon danc'd with the fair stranger light—
Uprear'd upon such height arose a pile
Of gorgeous columns on th' unburthen'd air,
Flashing from Parian marble that twin smile
Far down upon the wave that sparkled there,
And nursled the young mountain in its lair.
* Of molten stars their pavement, such as fall
Thro' the ebon air, besilvering the pall
Of their own dissolution, while they die—
Adorning then the dwellings of the sky.
A dome, by linked light from Heaven let down,
Sat gently on these columns as a crown—
A window of one circular diamond, there,
Look'd out above into the purple air,
And rays from God shot down that meteor chain
And hallow'd all the beauty twice again,
Save when, between th' Empyrean and that ring,

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* Some star which, from the ruin'd roof
Of shak'd Olympus, by mischance, did fall.—*Milton.*

Some eager spirit flapp'd his dusky wing.
But on the pillars Seraph eyes have seen
The dimness of this world ; that greyish green
That Nature loves the best for Beauty's grave
Lurk'd in each cornice, round each architrave—
And every sculptur'd cherub thereabout,
That from his marble dwelling peerèd out,
Seem'd earthly in the shadow of his niche—
Achaian statues in a world so rich !
* Friezes from Tadmor and Persepolis
From Balbec, and the stilly, clear abyss
† Of beautiful Gomorrah ! Oh ! the wave
Is now upon thee—but too late to save !

Sound loves to revel in a summer night :
Witness the murmur of the grey twilight
‡ That stole upon the ear, in Eyraco,
Of many a wild star-gazer long ago—

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* Voltaire, in speaking of Persepolis, says : "Je connois bien l' admiration qu' inspirent ces ruines—mais un palais érigé au pied d' une chaine des rochers sterils—peut il être un chef-d' œuvre des arts ?"

† "Oh ! the wave"—Ula Deguisi is the Turkish appellation ; but, on its own shores, it is called Bahar Loth, or Almotanah. There were undoubtedly more than two cities engulfed in the "dead sea." In the valley of Siddim were five—Adrah, Zeboin, Zoar, Sodom, and Gomorrah. Stephen of Byzantium mentions eight, and Strabo thirteen (engulfed),—but the last is out of all reason.

It is said [Tacitus, Strabo, Josephus, Daniel of St. Saba, Nau, Mundrell, Troilo, D'Arvieux], that after an excessive drought, the vestiges of columns, walls, etc., are seen above the surface. At *any* season, such remains may be discovered by looking down into the transparent lake, and at such distances as would argue the existence of many settlements in the space now usurped by the "Asphaltites."

‡ Eyraco—Chaldea.

That stealeth ever on the ear of him
Who, musing, gazeth on the distance dim,
And sees the darkness coming as a cloud—
* Is not its form—its voice—most palpable and loud?

But what is this?—it cometh—and it brings
A music with it—'t is the rush of wings—
A pause—and then a sweeping, falling strain,
And Nesace is in her halls again.
From the wild energy of wanton haste
Her cheeks were flushing, and her lips apart;
And zone that clung around her gentle waist
Had burst beneath the heaving of her heart.
Within the centre of that hall to breathe
She paus'd and panted, Zanthe! all beneath,
The fairy light that kiss'd her golden hair
And long'd to rest, yet could but sparkle there!

† Young flowers were whispering in melody
To happy flowers that night—and tree to tree;
Fountains were gushing music as they fell
In many a star-lit grove, or moon-lit dell;
Yet silence came upon material things—
Fair flowers, bright waterfalls and angel wings—
And sound alone that from the spirit sprang
Bore burthen to the charm the maiden sang:

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* I have often thought I could distinctly hear the sound of the darkness as it stole over the horizon.

† Fairies use flowers for their charactery.—*Merry Wives of Windsor.*

"'Neath blue-bell or streamer—
Or tufted wild spray
That keeps, from the dreamer,
* The moonbeam away—
Bright beings! that ponder,
With half-closing eyes,
On the stars, which your wonder
Hath drawn from the skies,
Till they glance thro' the shade, and
Come down to your brow
Like —— eyes of the maiden
Who calls on you now—
Arise! from your dreaming
In violet bowers,
To duty beseeming
These star-litten hours—
And shake from your tresses
Encumber'd with dew
The breath of those kisses
That cumber them too—
(Oh! how, without you, Love!
Could angels be blest?)
Those kisses of true love
That lull'd ye to rest!
Up!—shake from your wing
Each hindering thing:

* In Scripture is this passage—"The sun shall not harm thee by day, nor the moon by night." It is perhaps not generally known that the moon, in Egypt, has the effect of producing blindness to those who sleep with the face exposed to its rays, to which circumstance the passage evidently alludes.

The dew of the night—
It would weigh down your flight
And true love caresses—
Oh! leave them apart!
They are light on the tresses,
But lead on the heart.

"Ligeia! Ligeia!
My beautiful one!
Whose harshest idea
Will to melody run,
Oh! is it thy will
On the breezes to toss?
Or, capriciously still,
* Like the lone Albatross,
Incumbent on night
(As she on the air)
To keep watch with delight
On the harmony there?

"Ligeia! wherever
Thy image may be,
No magic shall sever
Thy music from thee.
Thou hast bound many eyes
In a dreamy sleep—
But the strains still arise
Which *thy* vigilance keep—
The sound of the rain

*The albatross is said to sleep on the wing.

Which leaps down to the flower,
And dances again
In the rhythm of the shower—
* The murmur that springs
From the growing of grass
Are the music of things—
But are modell'd, alas !—
Away, then, my dearest,
Oh ! hie thee away
To springs that lie clearest
Beneath the moon-ray—
To lone lake that smiles,
In its dream of deep rest,
At the many star-isles
That enjewel its breast—
Where wild flowers, creeping,
Have mingled their shade,
On its margin is sleeping
Full many a maid—
Some have left the cool glade, and
† Have slept with the bee—

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* I met with this idea in an old English tale, which I am now unable to obtain, and quote from memory.—" The verie essence and, as it were, springe-heade and origine of all musiche is the verie pleasaunte sounde which the trees of the forest do make when they growe."

† The wild bee will not sleep in the shade if there be moonlight.

The rhyme in this verse, as in one about sixty lines before, has an appearance of affectation. It is, however, imitated from Sir. W. Scott, or rather from Claud Halcro—in whose mouth I admired its effect :

Oh ! were there an island,
Tho' ever so wild
Where woman might smile, and
No man be beguil'd, etc.

Arouse them, my maiden,
On moorland and lea—
Go ! breathe on their slumber,
All softly in ear,
The musical number
They slumber'd to hear—
For what can awaken
An angel so soon
Whose sleep hath been taken
Beneath the cold moon,
As the spell which no slumber
Of witchery may test,
The rhythmical number
Which lull'd him to rest ?"

Spirits in wing, and angels to the view,
A thousand seraphs burst th' Empyrean thro',
Young dreams still hovering on their drowsy flight—
Seraphs in all but "Knowledge," the keen light
That fell, refracted, thro' thy bounds, afar,
O Death ! from eye of God upon that star :
Sweet was that error—sweeter still that death—
Sweet was that error—ev'n with *us* the breath
Of Science dims the mirror of our joy—
To them 't were the Simoom, and would destroy—
For what (to them) availeth it to know
That Truth is Falsehood—or that Bliss is Woe ?
Sweet was their death—with them to die was rife
With the last ecstasy of satiate life—
Beyond that death no immortality—

But sleep that pondereth is not "to be"—
And there—oh! may my weary spirit dwell—
* Apart from Heaven's Eternity—and yet how far from Hell!
What guilty spirit, in what shrubbery dim,
Heard not the stirring summons of that hymn?
But two: they fell: for Heaven no grace imparts
To those who hear not for their beating hearts.
A maiden-angel and her seraph-lover—
Oh! where (and ye may seek the wide skies over)
Was Love, the blind, near sober Duty known?
† Unguided Love hath fallen—'mid "tears of perfect moan."

He was a goodly spirit—he who fell:
A wanderer by mossy-mantled well—
A gazer on the lights that shine above—
A dreamer in the moonbeam by his love:
What wonder? for each star is eye-like there,

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* With the Arabians there is a medium between Heaven and Hell, where men suffer no punishment, but yet do not attain that tranquil and even happiness which they suppose to be characteristic of heavenly enjoyment

Un no rompido sueno—
Un dia puro—allegre—libre
Quiera—
Libre de amor—de zelo—
De odio—de esperanza—de rezelo.—*Luis Ponce de Leon.*

Sorrow is not excluded from "Al Aaraaf," but it is that sorrow which the living love to cherish for the dead, and which, in some minds, resembles the delirium of opium. The passionate excitement of Love and the buoyancy of spirit attendant upon intoxication are its less holy pleasures—the price of which, to those souls who make choice of "Al Aaraaf" as their residence after life, is final death and annihilation,

† There be tears of perfect moan
Wept for thee in Helicon.—*Milton.*

And looks so sweetly down on Beauty's hair—
And they, and ev'ry mossy spring were holy
To his love-haunted heart and melancholy.
The night had found (to him a night of woe)
Upon a mountain crag, young Angelo—
Beetling it bends athwart the solemn sky,
And scowls on starry worlds that down beneath it lie.
Here sat he with his love—his dark eye bent
With eagle gaze along the firmament:
Now turn'd it upon her—but ever then
It trembled to the orb of EARTH again.

"Ianthe, dearest, see! how dim that ray!
How lovely 't is to look so far away!
She seem'd not thus upon that autumn eve
I left her gorgeous halls—nor mourn'd to leave.
That eve—that eve—I should remember well—
The sun-ray dropp'd, in Lemnos, with a spell
On th' Arabesque carving of a gilded hall
Wherein I sat, and on the draperied wall—
And on my eyelids—O the heavy light!
How drowsily it weigh'd them into night!
On flowers, before, and mist, and love they ran
With Persian Saadi in his Gulistan:
But O that light!—I slumber'd—Death, the while,
Stole o'er my senses in that lovely isle
So softly that no single silken hair
Awoke that slept—or knew that he was there.

"The last spot of Earth's orb I trod upon

* Was a proud temple call'd the Parthenon—
More beauty clung around her column'd wall
† Than ev'n thy glowing bosom beats withal;
And when old Time my wing did disenthral
Thence sprang I—as the eagle from his tower,
And years I left behind me in an hour.
What time upon her airy bounds I hung
One half the garden of her globe was flung,
Unrolling as a chart unto my view—
Tenantless cities of the desert too!
Ianthe, beauty crowded on me then,
And half I wish'd to be again of men."

"My Angelo! and why of them to be?
A brighter dwelling-place is here for thee—
And greener fields than in yon world above,
And woman's loveliness—and passionate love."

"But, list, Ianthe! when the air so soft
‡ Fail'd, as my pennon'd spirit leapt aloft,
Perhaps my brain grew dizzy—but the world
I left so late was into chaos hurl'd—
Sprang from her station, on the winds apart,
And roll'd, a flame, the fiery Heaven athwart.
Methought, my sweet one, then I ceased to soar
And fell—not swiftly as I rose before,

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* It was entire in 1687—the most elevated spot in Athens,

† Shadowing more beauty in their airy brows
Than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love.—*Marlowe.*

‡ Pennon—for pinion.—*Milton.*

But with a downward, tremulous motion thro'
Light, brazen rays, this golden star unto !
Nor long the measure of my falling hours,
For nearest of all stars was thine to ours—
Dread star ! that came, amid a night of mirth,
A red Dædalion on the timid Earth.

"We came—and to thy Earth—but not to us
Be given our lady's bidding to discuss :
We came, my love ; around, above, below,
Gay fire-fly of the night we come and go,
Nor ask a reason save the angel-nod
She grants to us, as granted by her God—
But, Angelo, than thine gray Time unfurl'd
Never his fairy wing o'er fairer world !
Dim was its little disk, and angel eyes
Alone could see the phantom in the skies,
When first Al Aaraaf knew her course to be
Headlong thitherward o'er the starry sea—
But when its glory swell'd upon the sky,
As glowing Beauty's bust beneath man's eye,
We paus'd before the heritage of men,
And thy star trembled—as doth Beauty then ! "

Thus, in discourse, the lovers whiled away
The night that waned and waned and brought no day.
They fell : for Heaven to them no hope imparts
Who hear not for the beating of their hearts.

TO THE RIVER ——.

FAIR river! in thy bright, clear flow
Of crystal, wandering water,
Thou art an emblem of the glow
Of beauty—the unhidden heart—
The playful maziness of art
In old Alberto's daughter;

But when within thy wave she looks—
Which glistens then, and trembles—
Why, then, the prettiest of brooks
Her worshipper resembles;
For in his heart, as in thy stream,
Her image deeply lies—
His heart which trembles at the beam
Of her soul-searching eyes.

TAMERLANE.

KIND solace in a dying hour!
Such, father, is not (now) my theme—
I will not madly deem that power
Of Earth may shrive me of the sin
Unearthly pride that revell'd in—
I have no time to dote or dream:
You call it hope—that fire of fire!
It is but agony of desire:
If I *can* hope—O God! I can—

Its fount is holier—more divine—
I would not call thee fool, old man,
But such is not a gift of thine.

Know thou the secret of a spirit
Bow'd from its wild pride into shame.
O yearning heart! I did inherit
Thy withering portion with the fame,
The searing glory which hath shone
Amid the Jewels of my throne,
Halo of Hell! and with a pain
Not Hell shall make me fear again—
O craving heart, for the lost flowers
And sunshine of my summer hours!
The undying voice of that dead time,
With its interminable chime,
Rings, in the spirit of a spell,
Upon thy emptiness—a knell.

I have not always been as now:
The fever'd diadem on my brow
I claim'd and won usurpingly——
Hath not the same fierce heirdom given
Rome to the Cæsar—this to me?
The heritage of a kingly mind,
And a proud spirit which hath striven
Triumphantly with human kind.

On mountain soil I first drew life:
The mists of the Taglay have shed
Nightly their dews upon my head,

And I believe, the wingèd strife
And tumult of the headlong air
Have nestled in my very hair.

So late from Heaven—that dew—it fell
('Mid dreams of an unholy night)
Upon me with the touch of Hell,
While the red flashing of the light
From clouds that hung, like banners, o'er,
Appeared to my half-closing eye
The pageantry of monarchy,
And the deep trumpet-thunder's roar
Came hurriedly upon me, telling
Of human battle, where my voice,
My own voice, silly child!—was swelling
(Oh! how my spirit would rejoice,
And leap within me at the cry)
The battle-cry of Victory!

The rain came down upon my head
Unshelter'd—and the heavy wind
Rendered me mad and deaf and blind.
It was but man, I thought, who shed
Laurels upon me: and the rush—
The torrent of the chilly air
Gurgled within my ear the crush
Of empires—with the captive's prayer—
The hum of suitors—and the tone
Of flattery 'round a sovereign's throne.

My passions, from that hapless hour,
  Usurp'd a tyranny which men
Have deem'd, since I have reached to power,
    My innate nature—be it so :
  But, father, there liv'd one who, then,
Then—in my boyhood—when their fire
    Burn'd with a still intenser glow
(For passion must, with youth, expire)
  E'en *then* who knew this iron heart
  In woman's weakness had a part.

I have no words—alas !—to tell
The loveliness of loving well !
Nor would I now attempt to trace
The more than beauty of a face
Whose lineaments, upon my mind,
Are——shadows on th' unstable wind :
Thus I remember having dwelt
  Some page of early lore upon,
With loitering eye, till I have felt
The letters—with their meaning—melt
  To fantasies—with none.

Oh, she was worthy of all love !
  Love, as in infancy, was mine—
'T was such as angel minds above
  Might envy ; her young heart the shrine
On which my every hope and thought
  Were incense—then a goodly gift,

For they were childish and upright—
Pure——as her young example taught ;
Why did I leave it, and, adrift,
Trust to the fire within for light ?

We grew in age—and love—together—
Roaming the forest and the wild ;
My breast her shield in wintry weather—
And when the friendly sunshine smil'd.
And she would mark the opening skies,
I saw no Heaven—but in her eyes.

Young Love's first lesson is——the heart ;
For 'mid that sunshine and those smiles,
When, from our little cares apart,
And laughing at her girlish wiles,
I 'd throw me on her throbbing breast,
And pour my spirit out in tears—
There was no need to speak the rest—
No need to quiet any fears
Of her—who ask'd no reason why,
But turn'd on me her quiet eye !

Yet *more* than worthy of the love
My spirit struggled with, and strove,
When, on the mountain peak, alone,
Ambition lent it a new tone—
I had no being, but in thee :
The world, and all it did contain
In the earth—the air—the sea—
Its joy—its little lot of pain

That was new pleasure——the ideal,
  Dim, vanities of dreams by night—
And dimmer nothings which were real—
  (Shadows—and a more shadowy light!)
Parted upon their misty wings,
    And so, confusedly, became
    Thine image and—a name—a name!
Two separate—yet most intimate things.

I was ambitious—have you known
  The passion, father? You have not:
A cottager, I mark'd a throne
Of half the world as all my own,
  And murmur'd at such lowly lot—
But, just like any other dream,
  Upon the vapor of the dew
My own had past, did not the beam
  Of beauty which did while it thro'
The minute—the hour—the day—oppress
My mind with double loveliness.

We walk'd together on the crown
Of a high mountain which look'd down
Afar from its proud natural towers
  Of rock and forest on the hills—
The dwindled hills! begirt with bowers
  And shouting with a thousand rills.

I spoke to her of power and pride,
  But mystically—in such guise

That she might deem it nought beside
The moment's converse; in her eyes
I read, perhaps too carelessly,
A mingled feeling with my own;
The flush on her bright cheek to me
Seem'd to become a queenly throne
Too well that I should let it be
Light in the wilderness alone.

I wrapp'd myself in grandeur then,
And donn'd a visionary crown;
Yet it was not that Fantasy
Had thrown her mantle over me,
But that, among the rabble—men—
Lion ambition is chain'd down,
And crouches to a keeper's hand;
Not so in deserts where the grand—
The wild—the terrible conspire
With their own breath to fan his fire.

Look 'round thee now on Samarcand!
Is she not queen of Earth? her pride
Above all cities? in her hand
Their destinies? in all beside
Of glory which the world hath known,
Stands she not nobly and alone?
Falling, her veriest stepping-stone
Shall form the pedestal of a throne,—
And who her sovereign? Timour,—he

Whom the astonished people saw
Striding o'er empires haughtily
A diadem'd outlaw!

O human love! thou spirit given
On Earth of all we hope in Heaven!
Which fall'st into the soul like rain
Upon the Siroc-wither'd plain,
And, failing in thy power to bless,
But leav'st the heart a wilderness!
Idea! which bindest life around
With music of so strange a sound,
And beauty of so wild a birth,—
Farewell! for I have won the Earth.

When Hope, the eagle that tower'd, could see
No cliff beyond him in the sky,
His pinions were bent droopingly,
And homeward turn'd his soften'd eye.
'T was sunset: when the sun will part
There comes a sullenness of heart
To him who still would look upon
The glory of the summer sun.
That soul will hate the ev'ning mist,
So often lovely, and will list
To the sound of the coming darkness (known
To those whose spirits hearken) as one
Who, in a dream of night, *would* fly,
But *cannot* from a danger nigh.

What tho' the moon—the white moon—
Shed all the splendor of her noon,
Her smile is chilly, and *her* beam,
In that time of dreariness, will seem
(So like you gather in your breath)
A portrait taken after death.
And boyhood is a summer sun
Whose waning is the dreariest one—
For all we live to know is known
And all we seek to keep hath flown—
Let life, then, as the day-flower, fall
With the noon-day beauty—which is all.

I reach'd my home—my home no more—
For all had flown who made it so.
I pass'd from out its mossy door,
And, tho' my tread was soft and low,
A voice came from the threshold stone
Of one whom I had earlier known—
Oh, I defy thee, Hell, to show
On beds of fire that burn below,
An humbler heart—a deeper woe.

Father, I firmly do believe—
I *know*—for Death who comes for me
From regions of the blest afar,
Where there is nothing to deceive,
Hath left his iron gate ajar,
And rays of truth you cannot see

Are flashing thro' Eternity——
I do believe that Eblis hath
A snare in every human path—
Else how, when in the holy grove
I wandered of the idol, Love,
Who daily scents his snowy wings
With incense of burnt offerings
From the most unpolluted things,
Whose pleasant bowers are yet so riven
Above with trellis'd rays from Heaven
No mote may shun—no tiniest fly—
The light'ning of his eagle eye—
How was it that Ambition crept,
  Unseen, amid the revels there,
Till growing bold, he laughed and leapt
  In the tangles of Love's very hair?

TO ——.

THE bowers whereat, in dreams, I see
  The wantonest singing birds,
Are lips—and all thy melody
  Of lip-begotten words—

Thine eyes, in Heaven of heart enshrined
  Then desolately fall,
O God! on my funereal mind
  Like starlight on a pall—

Thy heart—*thy* heart !—I wake and sigh,
And sleep to dream till day
Of the truth that gold can never buy—
Of the baubles that it may.

A DREAM.

IN visions of the dark night
I have dreamed of joy departed ;
But a waking dream of life and light
Hath left me broken-hearted.

Ah ! what is not a dream by day
To him whose eyes are cast
On things around him, with a ray
Turned back upon the past ?

That holy dream, that holy dream,
While all the world were chiding,
Hath cheered me as a lovely beam
A lonely spirit guiding.

What though that light, thro' storm and night,
So trembled from afar—
What could there be more purely bright
In Truth's day-star ?

ROMANCE.

ROMANCE, who loves to nod and sing,
With drowsy head and folded wing,
Among the green leaves as they shake
Far down within some shadowy lake
To me a painted paroquet
Hath been—a most familiar bird—
Taught me my alphabet to say,
To lisp my very earliest word
While in the wild wood I did lie,
A child—with a most knowing eye.

Of late, eternal Condor years
So shake the very Heaven on high
With tumult as they thunder by,
I have no time for idle cares
Through gazing on the unquiet sky.
And when an hour with calmer wings
Its down upon my spirit flings—
That little time with lyre and rhyme
To while away—forbidden things!
My heart would feel to be a crime
Unless it trembled with the strings.

FAIRY-LAND.

DIM vales—and shadowy floods—
And cloudy-looking woods,
Whose forms we can't discover
For the tears that drip all over
Huge moons there wax and wane—
Again—again—again—
Every moment of the night
Forever changing places—
And they put out the star-light
With the breath from their pale faces.
About twelve by the moon-dial
One more filmy than the rest
(A kind which, upon trial,
They have found to be the best)
Comes down—still down—and down
With its centre on the crown
Of a mountain's eminence,
While its wide circumference
In easy drapery falls
Over hamlets, over halls,
Wherever they may be—
O'er the strange woods—o'er the sea—
Over spirits on the wing
Over every drowsy thing—
And buries them up quite
In a labyrinth of light—
And then, how deep!—Oh, deep!
Is the passion of their sleep.

In the morning they arise,
And their moony covering
Is soaring in the skies,
With the tempests as they toss,
Like——almost any thing—
Or a yellow Albatross.
They use that moon no more
For the same end as before—
Videlicet a tent
Which I think extravagant:
Its atomies, however,
Into a shower dissever,
Of which those butterflies,
Of earth, who seek the skies,
And so come down again
(Never-contented things!)
Have brought a specimen
Upon their quivering wings.

THE LAKE—TO ——.

IN spring of youth it was my lot
To haunt of the wide world a spot
The which I could not love the less—
So lovely was the loneliness
Of a wild lake, with black rock bound,
And the tall pines that towered around.

But when the Night had thrown her pall
Upon that spot, as upon all,

And the mystic wind went by
Murmuring in melody—
Then—ah! then I would awake
To the terror of the lone lake.

Yet that terror was not fright,
But a tremulous delight—
A feeling not the jewelled mine
Could teach or bribe me to define—
Nor Love—although the Love were thine.

Death was in that poisonous wave,
And in its gulf a fitting grave
For him who thence could solace bring
To his lone imagining—
Whose solitary soul could make
An Eden of that dim lake.

SONG.

I SAW thee on thy bridal day—
When a burning blush came o'er thee,
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee:

And in thine eye a kindling light
(Whatever it might be)
Was all on Earth my aching sight
Of Loveliness could see.

That blush, perhaps, was maiden shame—
As such it well may pass—
Though its glow hath raised a fiercer flame
In the breast of him, alas!

Who saw thee on that bridal day,
When that deep blush *would* come o'er thee
Though happiness around thee lay,
The world all love before thee.

TO M. L. S——.

OF all who hail thy presence as the morning—
Of all to whom thine absence is the night—
The blotting utterly from out high heaven
The sacred sun—of all who, weeping, bless thee
Hourly for hope—for life—ah! above all,
For the resurrection of deep-buried faith
In Truth—in Virtue—in Humanity—
Of all who, on Despair's unhallowed bed
Lying down to die, have suddenly arisen
At thy soft-murmured words, "Let there be light!"
At the soft-murmured words that were fulfilled
In the seraphic glancing of thine eyes—
Of all who owe thee most—whose gratitude
Nearest resembles worship—oh, remember
The truest—the most fervently devoted,
And think that those weak lines are written by him—
By him who, as he pens them, thrills to think
His spirit is communing with an angel's.

SPIRITS OF THE DEAD.

THY soul shall find itself alone
'Mid dark thoughts of the gray tombstone—
Not one, of all the crowd, to pry
Into thine hour of secrecy.

Be silent in that solitude
Which is not loneliness, for then
The spirits of the dead who stood
In life before thee are again
In death around thee, and their will
Shall overshadow thee : be still.

The night, tho' clear, shall frown,
And the stars shall not look down
From their high thrones in the Heaven
With light like Hope to mortals given ;
But their red orbs, without beam,
To thy weariness shall seem

As a burning and a fever
Which would cling to thee forever.
Now are thoughts thou shalt not banish—
Now are visions ne'er to vanish ;
From thy spirit shall they pass
No more—like dew-drops from the grass.

The breeze—the breath of God—is still,
And the mist upon the hill
Shadowy—shadowy—yet unbroken,

Is a symbol and a token,—
How it hangs upon the trees,
A mystery of mysteries!

TO HELEN.

HELEN, thy beauty is to me
Like those Nicean barks of yore,
That gently, o'er a perfumed sea,
The weary, way-worn wanderer bore
To his own native shore.

On desperate seas long wont to roam,
Thy hyacinth hair, thy classic face,
Thy Naiad airs have brought me home
To the glory that was Greece
And the grandeur that was Rome.

Lo! in yon brilliant window-niche
How statue-like I see thee stand!
The agate lamp within thy hand,
Ah! Psyche, from the regions which
Are Holy Land!

ALONE.

FROM childhood's hour I have not been
As others were—I have not seen
As others saw—I could not bring
My passions from a common spring.
From the same source I have not taken
My sorrow ; I could not awaken
My heart to joy at the same tone ;
And all I lov'd, *I* lov'd alone.
Then—in my childhood—in the dawn
Of a most stormy life—was drawn
From ev'ry depth of good and ill
The mystery which binds me still :
From the torrent, or the fountain,
From the red cliff of the mountain,
From the sun that 'round me roll'd
In its autumn tint of gold—
From the lightning in the sky
As it pass'd me flying by—
From the thunder and the storm,
And the cloud that took the form
(When the rest of Heaven was blue)
Of a demon in my view.

CRYPTOGRAPHY.

AS we can scarcely imagine a time when there did not exist a necessity, or at least a desire, of transmitting information from one individual to another in such a manner as to elude general comprehension, so we may well suppose the practice of writing in cipher to be of great antiquity. De la Guilletiere, therefore, who, in his "Lacedæmon Ancient and Modern," maintains that the Spartans were the inventors of Cryptography, is obviously in error. He speaks of the *scytala* as being the origin of the art; but he should only have cited it as one of its earliest instances, so far as our records extend. The *scytalæ* were two wooden cylinders, precisely similar in all respects. The general of an army, in going upon any expedition, received from the *ephori* one of these cylinders, while the other remained in their possession. If either party had occasion to communicate with the other, a narrow strip of parchment was so wrapped around the *scytala* that the edges of the skin fitted accurately each to each. The writing was then inscribed longitudinally, and the epistle unrolled and despatched. If, by mis-

chance, the messenger was intercepted, the letter proved unintelligible to his captors. If he reached his destination safely, however, the party addressed had only to involve the second cylinder in the strip to decipher the inscription. The transmission to our own times of this obvious mode of cryptography is due, probably, to the *historical* use of the *scytala* rather than to any thing else. Similar means of secret intercommunication must have existed almost contemporaneously with the invention of letters.

It may be as well to remark, in passing, that in none of the treatises on the subject of this paper which have fallen under our cognizance have we observed any suggestion of a method—other than those which apply alike to all ciphers—for the solution of the cipher by *scytala*. We read of instances, indeed, in which the intercepted parchments were deciphered; but we are not informed that this was ever done except accidentally. Yet a solution might be obtained with absolute certainty in this manner. The strip of skin being intercepted, let there be prepared a cone of great length comparatively—say six feet long—and whose circumference at base shall at least equal the length of the strip. Let this latter be rolled upon the cone near the base, edge to edge, as above described; then, still keeping edge to edge, and maintaining the parchment close upon the cone, let it be gradually slipped toward the apex. In this process, some of those words, syllables, or letters, whose connection is intended, will be

sure to come together at that point of the cone where its diameter equals that of the *scytala* upon which the cipher was written. And as in passing up the cone to its apex all possible diameters are passed over, there is no chance of a failure. The circumference of the *scytala* being thus ascertained, a similar one can be made, and the cipher applied to it.

Few persons can be made to believe that it is not quite an easy thing to invent a method of secret writing which shall baffle investigation. Yet it may be roundly asserted that human ingenuity cannot concoct a cipher which human ingenuity cannot resolve. In the facility with which such writing is deciphered, however, there exist very remarkable differences in different intellects. Often, in the case of two individuals of acknowledged equality as regards ordinary mental efforts, it will be found that, while one cannot unriddle the commonest cipher, the other will scarcely be puzzled by the most abstruse. It may be observed generally that in such investigations the analytic ability is very forcibly called into action; and, for this reason, cryptographical solutions might, with great propriety, be introduced into academies as the means of giving tone to the most important of the powers of mind.

Were two individuals, totally unpractised in cryptograpy, desirous of holding by letter a correspondence which should be unintelligible to all but themselves, it is most probable that they would at once think of a peculiar

alphabet, to which each should have a key. At first it would, perhaps, be arranged that *a* should stand for *z*, *b* for *y*, *c* for *x*, *d* for *w*, etc., etc.; that is to say, the order of the letters would be reversed. Upon second thoughts, this arrangement appearing too obvious, a more complex mode would be adopted. The first thirteen letters might be written beneath the last thirteen, thus:

n o p q r s t u v w x y z
a b c d e f g h i j k l m;

and, so placed, *a* might stand for *n* and *n* for *a*, *o* for *b* and *b* for *o*, etc., etc. This, again, having an air of regularity which might be fathomed, the key alphabet might be struck absolutely at random. Thus,

a might stand for p
b " " " x
c " " " u
d " " " o, etc.

The correspondents, unless convinced of their error by the solution of their cipher, would, no doubt, be willing to rest in this latter arrangement as affording full security. But if not, they would be likely to hit upon the plan of arbitrary marks used in place of the usual characters. For example:

(might be employed for a
. " " " b
: " " " c
; " " " d
) " " " e, etc.

A letter composed of such characters would have an intricate appearance unquestionably. If still, however, it

did not give full satisfaction, the idea of a perpetually shifting alphabet might be conceived, and thus effected. Let two circular pieces of pasteboard be prepared, one about half an inch in diameter less than the other. Let the centre of the smaller be placed upon the centre of the larger one, and secured for a moment from slipping; while *radii* are drawn from the common centre to the circumference of the smaller circle, and thus extended to the circumference of the greater. Let there be twenty-six of these *radii*, forming on each pasteboard twenty-six spaces. In each of these spaces on the under circle write one of the letters of the alphabet, so that the whole alphabet be written—if at random so much the better. Do the same with the upper circle. Now run a pin through the common centre, and let the upper circle revolve, while the under one is held fast. Now stop the revolution of the upper circle, and, while both lie still, write the epistle required; using for *a* that letter in the smaller circle which tallies with *a* in the larger, for *b* that letter in the smaller circle which tallies with *b* in the larger, etc., etc. In order that an epistle thus written may be read by the person for whom it is intended, it is only necessary that he should have in his possession circles constructed as those just described, and that he should know any two of the characters (one in the under and one in the upper circle) which were in juxtaposition when his correspondent wrote the cipher. Upon this latter point he is informed by looking at the two initial letters of the docu-

ment which serves as a key. Thus, if he sees *a m* at the beginning, he concludes that by turning his circles so as to put these characters in conjunction, he will arrive at the alphabet employed.

At a cursory glance, these various modes of constructing a cipher seem to have about them an air of inscrutable secrecy. It appears almost an impossibility to unriddle what has been put together by so complex a method. And to some persons the difficulty might be great; but to others—to those skilled in deciphering—such enigmas are very simple indeed. The reader should bear in mind that the basis of the whole art of solution, as far as regards these matters, is found in the general principles of the formation of language itself, and thus is altogether independent of the particular laws which govern any cipher, or the construction of its key. The difficulty of reading a cryptographical puzzle is by no means always in accordance with the labor or ingenuity with which it has been constructed. The sole use of the key, indeed, is for those *au fait* to the cipher; in its perusal by a third party, no reference is had to it at all. The lock of the secret is picked. In the different methods of cryptography specified above, it will be observed that there is a gradually increasing complexity. But this complexity is only in shadow. It has no substance whatever. It appertains merely to the formation, and has no bearing upon the solution of the cipher. The last mode mentioned is not in the least degree more difficult to be deciphered than the first—whatever may be the difficulty of either.

In the discussion of an analogous subject, in one of the weekly papers of this city, about eighteen months ago, the writer of this article had occasion to speak of the application of a rigorous *method* in all forms of thought—of its advantages—of the extension of its use even to what is considered the operation of pure fancy—and thus, subsequently, of the solution of cipher. He even ventured to assert that no cipher, of the character above specified, could be sent to the address of the paper which he would not be able to resolve. This challenge excited, most unexpectedly, a very lively interest among the numerous readers of the journal. Letters were poured in upon the editor from all parts of the country; and many of the writers of these epistles were so convinced of the impenetrability of their mysteries as to be at great pains to draw him into wagers on the subject. At the same time, they were not always scrupulous about sticking to the point. The cryptographs were, in numerous instances, altogether beyond the limits defined in the beginning. Foreign languages were employed. Words and sentences were run together without interval. Several alphabets were used in the same cipher. One gentleman, but moderately endowed with conscientiousness, inditing us a puzzle composed of pot-hooks and hangers to which the wildest typography of the office could afford nothing similar, went even so far as to jumble together no less than *seven distinct alphabets*, without intervals between the letters *or between the lines*. Many of the cryptographs were dated

in Philadelphia, and several of those which urged the subject of a bet were written by gentlemen of this city. Out of, perhaps, one hundred ciphers altogether received, there was only one which we did not immediately succeed in resolving. This one we *demonstrated* to be an imposition,—that is to say, we fully proved it a jargon of random characters, having no meaning whatever. In respect to the epistle of the seven alphabets, we had the pleasure of completely *nonplussing* its inditer by a prompt and satisfactory translation.

The weekly paper mentioned was, for a period of some months, greatly occupied with the hieroglyphic and cabalistic-looking solutions of the cryptographs sent us from all quarters. Yet, with the exception of the writers of the ciphers, we do not believe that any individuals could have been found among the readers of the journal who regarded the matter in any other light than in that of a desperate humbug. We mean to say that no one really believed in the authenticity of the answers. One party averred that the mysterious figures were only inserted to give a *queer* air to the paper, for the purpose of attracting attention. Another thought it more probable that we not only solved the ciphers, but put them together ourselves for solution. This having been the state of affairs at the period when it was thought expedient to decline further dealings in necromancy, the writer of this article avails himself of the present opportunity to maintain the truth of the journal in question—to repel the charges of rigmarole by which

it was assailed—and to declare, in his own name, that the ciphers were all written in good faith, and solved in the same spirit.

A very common and somewhat too obvious mode of secret correspondence is the following: A card is interspersed, at irregular intervals with oblong spaces, about the length of ordinary words of three syllables in a bourgeois type. Another card is made exactly coinciding. One is in possession of each party. When a letter is to be written the key-card is placed upon the paper and words conveying the true meaning inscribed in the spaces. The card is then removed and the blanks filled up, so as to make out a signification different from the real one. When the person addressed receives the cipher he has merely to apply to it his own card, when the superfluous words are concealed, and the significant ones alone appear. The chief objection to this cryptograph is the difficulty of so filling the blanks as not to give a forced appearance to the sentences. Differences also in the handwriting between the words written in the spaces and those inscribed upon removal of the card will always be detected by a close observer.

A pack of cards is sometimes made the vehicle of a cipher in this manner: The parties determine, in the first place, upon certain arrangements of the pack. For example, it is agreed that, when a writing is to be commenced, a natural sequence of the spots shall be made; with spades at top, hearts next, diamonds next, and clubs

last. This order being obtained, the writer proceeds to inscribe upon the top card the first letter of his epistle, upon the next the second, upon the next the third, and so on until the pack is exhausted, when, of course, he will have written fifty-two letters. He now shuffles the pack according to a preconcerted plan. For example: he takes three cards from the bottom and places them at top, then one from top, placing it at bottom, and so on, for a given number of times. This done, he again inscribes fifty-two characters as before, proceeding thus until his epistle is written. The pack being received by the correspondent, he has only to place the cards in the order agreed upon for commencement to read, letter by letter, the first fifty-two characters as intended. He has then only to shuffle in the manner pre-arranged for the second perusal to decipher the series of the next fifty-two letters, and so on to the end. The objection to this cryptograph lies in the nature of the missive. *A pack of cards*, sent from one party to another, would scarcely fail to excite suspicion, and it cannot be doubted that it is far better to secure ciphers from being considered as such than to waste time in attempts at rendering them scrutiny-proof when intercepted. Experience shows that the most cunningly constructed cryptograph, if suspected, can and will be unriddled.

An unusually secure mode of secret intercommunication might be thus devised. Let the parties each furnish themselves with the copy of the same edition of a book—

the rarer the edition the better—as also the rarer the book. In the cryptograph, numbers are used altogether, and these numbers refer to the locality of letters in the volume. For example—a cipher is received commencing, 121-6-8. The party addressed refers to page 121, and looks at the sixth letter from the left of the page in the eighth line from the top. Whatever letter he there finds is the initial letter of the epistle—and so on. This method is very secure; yet it is *possible* to decipher any cryptograph written by its means—and it is greatly objectionable otherwise, on account of the time necessarily required for its solution, even with the key-volume.

It is not to be supposed that cryptography, as a serious thing, as the means of imparting important information, has gone out of use at the present day. It is still commonly practised in diplomacy; and there are individuals, even now, holding office in the eye of various foreign governments, whose real business is that of deciphering. We have already said that a peculiar mental action is called into play in the solution of cryptographical problems, at least in those of the higher order. Good cryptographists are rare indeed; and thus their services, although seldom required, are necessarily well requited.

An instance of the modern employment of writing in cipher is mentioned in a work lately published by Messieurs Lea and Blanchard of this city *—"Sketches of Conspicuous Living Characters of France." In a notice

* Philadelphia.—*Ed.*

of Berryer, it is said that a letter being addressed by the Duchess de Berri to the Legitimists of Paris, to inform them of her arrival, it was accompanied by a long note in cipher, the key of which she had forgotten to give. "The penetrating mind of Berryer," says the biographer, "soon discovered it. It was this phrase substituted for the twenty-four letters of the alphabet—*Le gouvernement provisoire.*"

The assertion that Berryer "soon discovered the key-phrase," merely proves that the writer of these memoirs is entirely innocent of cryptographical knowledge. Monsieur B. no doubt ascertained the key-phrase; but it was merely to satisfy his curiosity, *after the riddle had been read.* He made no use of the key in deciphering. The lock was picked.

In our notice of the book in question (published in the April number of this magazine)* we alluded to this subject thus:

"The phrase '*Le gouvernement provisoire*' is French, and the note in cipher was addressed to Frenchmen. The difficulty of deciphering may well be supposed much greater, had the key been in a foreign tongue; yet any one who will take the trouble may address us a note, in the same manner as here proposed, and the key-phrase may be either in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, or Greek (or in any of the dialects of these languages), and we pledge ourselves for the solution of the riddle."

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* Graham's.—*Ed.*

This challenge has elicited but a single response, which is embraccd in the following letter. The only quarrel we have with the epistle is, that its writer has declined giving us his name in full. We beg that he will take an early opportunity of doing this, and thus relieve us of the chance of that suspicion which was attached to the cryptography of the weekly journal above mentioned—the suspicion of inditing ciphers to ourselves. The postmark of the letter is *Stonington, Conn.*

"S———, Ct., *April*, 1841.

"*To the Editor of Graham's Magazine:*

"Sir—In the April number of your magazine, while reviewing the translation by Mr. Walsh of 'Sketches of Conspicuous Living Characters of France,' you invite your readers to address you a note in cipher, 'the key-phrase to which may be either in French, Italian, Spanish, German, Latin, or Greek,' and pledge yourself for its solution. My attention being called, by your remarks, to this species of cipher-writing, I composed for my own amusement the following exercises, in the first part of which the key-phrase is in English—in the second in Latin. As I did not see (by the number for May) that any of your correspondents had availed himself of your offer, I take the liberty to send the enclosed, on which, if you should think it worth your while, you can exercise your ingenuity. I am, yours respectfully,

"S. D. L."

No. 1.

Cauhiif aud ftd sdftirf ithot tacd wdde rdchfdr tiu fuae-

fshffheo fdoudf hetiusafhie tuis ied herhchriai fi aeiftdu wn sdaef it iuhfheo hiidohwid fi aen deodsf ths tiu itis hf iaf iuhoheaiin rdff hedr; aer ftd auf it ftif fdoudfin oissiehoafheo hefdiihodeod taf wdde odeduaiin fdusdr ounsfiouastn. Saen fsdohdf it fdoudf iuhfheo idud weiie fi ftd aeohdeff; fisdfhsdf a fiacdf tdar iaf ftacdr aer ftd ouiie iuhffde isie ihft fisd herdihwid oiiiiuheo tiihr, atfdu ithot ftd tahu wdheo sdushffdr fi ouiiaoahe, hetiusafhie oiiir wd fuaefshffdr ihft ihffid raeodu ftaf rhfoicdun iiiir defid iefhi ftd aswiiafiun dshffid fatdin udaotdr hff rdffheafhie. Ounsfiouastn tiidcdu siud suisduin dswuaodf ftifd sirdf it iuhfheo ithot aud uderdudr idohwid iein wn sdaef it fisd desiaeafiun wdn ithot sawdf weiie ftd udai fhoehthoafhie it ftd ohstduf dssiindr fi hff siffdffiu.

No. 2.

Ofoiioiiaso ortsiii sov eodisoioe afduiostifoi ft iftvi si tri oistoiv oiniafetsorit ifeov rsri afotiiiiv ridiiot irio rivvio eovit atrotfetsoria aioriti iitri tf oitovin tri aetifei ioreitit sov usttoi oioittstifo dfti afdooitior trso ifeov tri dfit otftfeov softriedi ft oistoiv oriofiforiti suitteii viireiiitifoi ft tri iarfoisiti iiti triur uet otiiiotiv uitfti rid io tri eoviieeiiiv rfasueostr ft rii dftrit tfoeei.

In the solution of the first of these ciphers we had little more than ordinary trouble. The second proved to be exceedingly difficult, and it was only by calling every faculty into play that we could read it at all. The first runs thus:

"Various are the methods which have been devised for transmitting secret information from one individual to another by means of writing, illegible to any except him for whom it was originally destined; and the art of thus secretly communicating intelligence has been generally termed *cryptography*. Many species of secret writing were known to the ancients. Sometimes a slave's head was shaved and the crown written upon with some indelible coloring fluid; after which the hair being permitted to grow again, information could be transmitted with little danger that discovery would ensue until the ambulatory epistle safely reached its destination. Cryptography, however pure, properly embraces those modes of writing which are rendered legible only by means of some explanatory key which makes known the real signification of the ciphers employed to its possessor."

The key-phrase of this cryptograph is—"A word to the wise is sufficient."

The second is thus translated:

"Nonsensical phrases and unmeaning combinations of words, as the learned lexicographer would have confessed himself, when hidden under cryptographic ciphers, serve to *perpdex* the curious enquirer, and baffle penetration more completely than would the most profound *apothegms* of learned philosophers. Abstruse disquisitions of the scholiasts were they but presented before him in the undisguised vocabulary of his mother tongue ——"

The last sentence here (as will be seen) is broken off

short. The spelling we have strictly adhered to. *D*, by mistake, has been put for *l* in *perplex*.

The key-phrase is—"*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*"

In the ordinary cryptograph, as will be seen in reference to most of those we have specified above, the artificial alphabet agreed upon by the correspondents is employed, letter for letter in place of the usual or natural one. For example—two parties wish to communicate secretly. It is arranged before parting that

)	shall	stand	for a
(	"	"	b
—	"	"	c
*	"	"	d
.	"	"	e
'	"	"	f
;	"	"	g
:	"	"	h
?	"	"	i or j
!	"	"	k
&	"	"	l
o	"	"	m
«	"	"	n
†	"	"	o
‡	"	"	p
¶	"	"	q
☞	"	"	r
]	"	"	s
[	"	"	t
£	"	"	u or v
$	"	"	w
¿	"	"	x
¡	"	"	y
🖎	"	"	z

Now the following note is to be communicated:

"We must see you immediately upon a matter of great importance. Plots have been discovered, and the conspirators are in our hands. Hasten!"

These words would be written thus:

$ .o £] [ ] .. ¡ † £ ? oo. * ?) [. & ¡£ ‡ † ‘) o) [[. ☞ † ’ ; ☞ .) [? o ‡ † ☞ [ ) ‘ — . ‡ & † [ ] :) £. (. . ‘ * .] — † £. ☞ . *) ‘ * [: . — † ‘] ‡ ? ☞) [† ☞]) ☞ . ? ‘ † £ ☞ :) ‘ *] :)] [. ‘

This certainly has an intricate appearance, and would prove a most difficult cipher to any one not conversant with cryptography. But it will be observed that *a*, for example, is never represented by any other character than), *b* never by any other character than (, and so on. Thus by the discovery, accidental or otherwise, of any one letter, the party intercepting the epistle would gain a permanent and decided advantage, and could apply his knowledge to all the instances in which the character in question was employed throughout the cipher.

In the cryptographs, on the other hand, which have been sent us by our correspondent at Stonington, and which are identical in confirmation with the cipher resolved by Berryer, no such permanent advantage is to be obtained.

Let us refer to the second of these puzzles. Its key-phrase runs thus:

"*Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*"

Let us now place the alphabet beneath the phrase, letter beneath letter—

S	u	a	v	i	t	e	r	i	n	m	o	d	o	f	o	r	t	i	t	e	r	i	n	r	e
A	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

We here see that

a	stands for	c
d	"	m
e	"	g, u, and z
f	"	o
i	"	e, i, s, and w
m	"	k
n	"	j and x
o	"	l, n, and p
r	"	h, q, v, and y
s	"	a
t	"	f, r, and t
u	"	b
v	"	d

In this manner *n* stands for two letters, and *e*, *o*, and *t* for three each, while *i* and *r* represent each as many as four. Thirteen characters are made to perform the operations of the whole alphabet. The result of such a key-phrase upon the cipher is to give it the appearance of a mere medley of the letters, *e*, *o*, *t*, *r*, and *i*, the latter character greatly predominating through the accident of being employed for letters, which, themselves, are inordinately prevalent in most languages—we mean *e* and *i*.

A letter thus written being intercepted, and the key-phrase unknown, the individual who should attempt to decipher it may be imagined *guessing*, or otherwise attempting to convince himself, that a certain character (*i*, for example), represented the letter *e*. Looking throughout the cryptograph for confirmation of this idea he

would meet with nothing but a negation of it. He would see the character in situations where it could not possibly represent *e*. He might, for instance, be puzzled by four *i*'s forming of themselves a single word, without the intervention of any other character, in which case, of course, they could not be *all e*'s. It will be seen that the word *wise* might be thus constructed. We say this may be seen *now*, by us, in possession of the key-phrase, but the question will no doubt occur, how, *without* the key-phrase, and without cognizance of any single letter in the cipher, it would be possible for the intercepter of such a cryptograph to make any thing of such a word as *iiii?*

But again. A key-phrase might easily be constructed in which one character would represent seven, eight, or ten letters. Let us then imagine the word *iiiiiiiii* presenting itself in a cryptograph to an individual *without* the proper key-phrase, or, if this be a supposition somewhat too perplexing, let us suppose it occurring to the person for whom the cipher is designed, and who *has* the key-phrase. What is he to do with such a word as *iiiiiiiii?* In any of the ordinary books upon Algebra will be found a very concise *formula* (we have not the necessary type for its insertion here) for ascertaining the number of arrangements in which *m* letters may be placed, taken *n* at a time. But no doubt there are none of our readers ignorant of the innumerable combinations which may be made from these ten *i*'s. Yet, unless it occur otherwise by accident, the correspondent receiving the

cipher would have to write down all these combinations before attaining the word intended, and even when he had written them he would be inexpressibly perplexed in selecting the word designed from the vast number of other words arising in the course of the permutation.

To obviate, therefore, the exceeding difficulty of deciphering this species of cryptograph, on the part of the possessors of the key-phrase, and to confine the deep intricacy of the puzzle to those for whom the cipher was not designed, it becomes necessary that some *order* should be agreed upon by the parties corresponding,—some order in reference to which those characters are to be read which represent more than one letter—and this *order* must be held in view by the writer of the cryptograph. It may be agreed, for example, that the *first* time an *i* occurs in the cipher it is to be understood as representing the character which stands against the *first i* in the key-phrase, that the *second* time an *i* occurs it must be supposed to represent that letter which stands opposed to the *second i* in the key-phrase, etc., etc. Thus the *location* of each cipherical letter must be considered in connection with the character itself in order to determine its exact signification.

We say that some preconcerted *order* of this kind is necessary lest the cipher prove too intricate a lock to yield even to its true key. But it will be evident, upon inspection, that our correspondent at Stonington has inflicted upon us a cryptograph in which *no* order has

been preserved, in which many characters respectively stand, at absolute random, for many others. If, therefore, in regard to the gauntlet we threw down in April, he should be half-inclined to accuse us of braggadocio, he will yet admit that we have *more* than acted up to our boast. If what we then said was not said *suaviter in modo*, what we now do is at least done *fortiter in re*.

In these cursory observations we have by no means attempted to exhaust the subject of Cryptography. With such object in view a folio might be required. We have, indeed, mentioned only a few of the ordinary modes of cipher. Even two thousand years ago Æneas Tacticus detailed twenty distinct methods, and modern ingenuity has added much to the science. Our design has been chiefly suggestive, and perhaps we have already bored the readers of the Magazine. To those who desire further information upon this topic we may say that there are extant treatises by Trithemius, Cap. Porta, Vignere, and P. Niceron. The works of the two latter may be found, we believe, in the library of the Harvard University. If, however, there should be sought in these disquisitions, or in any, *rules for the solution* of cipher, the seeker will be disappointed. Beyond some hints in regard to the general structure of language, and some minute exercises in their practical application, he will find nothing upon record which he does not in his own intellect possess.

PINAKIDIA.

UNDER the head of "Random Thoughts," "Odds and Ends," "Stray Leaves," "Scraps," "Brevities," and a variety of similar titles, we occasionally meet, in periodicals and elsewhere, with papers of rich interest and value, the result in some cases of much thought and more research, expended, however, at a manifest disadvantage, if we regard merely the estimate which the public are willing to set upon such articles. It sometimes occurs that in papers of this nature may be found a collective mass of general but more usually of classical erudition, which, if dexterously besprinkled over a proper surface of narrative, would be sufficient to make the fortunes of one or two hundred ordinary novelists in these our good days, when all heroes and heroines are necessarily men and women of "extensive acquirements." But for the most part these "Brevities," etc., are either piecemeal cullings at second-hand from a variety of sources hidden or supposed to be hidden, or more audacious pilferings from those vast storehouses of brief facts, memoranda, and opinions in general literature, which are so abundant in all the

principal libraries of Germany and France. Of the former species the *Koran* of Laurence Sterne is, at the same time, one of the most consummately impudent and silly, and it may well be doubted whether a single paragraph of any merit in the whole of it may not be found, *nearly verbatim*, in the works of some one of his immediate contemporaries. If the *Lacon* of Mr. Colton is any better, its superiority consists altogether in a deeper ingenuity in disguising his stolen wares, and in that prescriptive right of the strongest, which, time out of mind, has decided upon calling every Napoleon a conqueror, and every Dick Turpin a thief. Seneca Machiavelli,* Balzac, the author of "La Manière de Bien Penser," Bielfeld the German, who wrote in French "Les Premiers Traits de l' Érudition Universelle," Rochefoucault, Bacon, Bolingbroke, and especially Burdon, of "materials for thinking" memory, possess among them indisputable claims to the ownership of nearly every thing worth owning in the book.

Of the latter species of theft we see frequent specimens in the continental magazines of Europe, and occasionally meet with them even in the lower class of periodicals in Great Britain. These specimens are usually extracts, by wholesale, from such works as the "Bibliothèques des Memorabilia Literaria," the "Recueil des Bon Pensées,"

* It is remarkable that much of what Colton has stolen from Machiavelli was previously stolen by Machiavelli from Plutarch. A MS. book of the "Apophthegms of the Ancients," by this latter writer, having fallen into Machiavelli's hands, he put them nearly all into the mouth of his hero, Castrucio Castracani.

the "Lettres Édifiantes et Curieuses," the "Literary Memoirs" of Sallengré, the "Mélanges Litéraires" of Suard and André, or the "Pièces Intéressantes et Peu Connues" of Laplace. D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature," "Literary Character," and "Calamities of Authors," have of late years proved exceedingly convenient to some little American pilferers in this line, but are now becoming too generally known to allow much hope of their good things being any longer appropriated with impunity.

Such collections as those of which we have been speaking are usually entertaining in themselves, and for the most part we relish every thing about them save their pretensions to originality. In offering ourselves something of the kind to our readers, we wish to be understood as disclaiming in a great degree every such pretension. Most of the following article is original, and will be readily recognized as such by the classical and general reader; some portions of it may have been written down in the words, or nearly in the words, of the primitive authorities. The whole is taken from a confused mass of marginal notes and entries in a commonplace-book. No certain arrangement has been considered necessary, and indeed so heterogeneous a farrago it would have been an endless task to methodize. We have chosen the heading *Pinakidia* or Tablets, as one sufficiently comprehensive. It was used for a somewhat similiar purpose by Dionysius of Halicarnassus.

The whole of Bulwer's elaborate argument on the immortality of the soul, which he has put into the mouth of "The Ambitious Student," may be confuted through the author's omission of one particular point in his summary of the attributes of Deity—a point which we cannot believe altogether omitted through accident. A single link is deficient in the chain, but the chain is worthless without it. No man doubts the immortality of the soul, yet of all truths, this truth of immortality is the most difficult to prove by any mere series of syllogisms. We would refer our readers to the argument here mentioned.

"The rude, rough, wild waste has its power to please,"

a line in one Mr. Odiorne's poem, "The Progress of Refinement," is pronounced by the American author of a book entitled "Antediluvian Antiquities" "the very best alliteration in all poetry."

Lipsius, in his treatise "De Supplicio Crucius," says that the upright beam of the cross was a *fixture* at the place of execution, whither the criminal was made to bear only the transverse arm. Consequently the painters are in error who depict our Saviour bearing the entire cross.

The tale in Plato's "Convivium," that man at first was male and female, and that, though Jupiter cleft them asunder, there was a natural love toward one another, seems to be only a corruption of the account in Genesis of Eve's being made from Adam's rib.

Corneille has these lines in one of his tragedies:

"Pleurez, pleurez, mes yeux, et fondez vous en eau,
La moitié de ma vie a mis l'autre au tombeau."

Which may be thus translated:

"Weep, weep, my eyes! It is no time to laugh,
For half myself has buried the other half."

Over the iron gate of a prison at Ferrara is this inscription—"Ingresso alla prigione di Torquato Tasso."

The Rabbi Manasseh published a book at Amsterdam entitled "The Hopes of Israel." It was founded upon the supposed number and power of the Jews in America. This supposition was derived from a fabulous account by Montesini of his having found a vast concourse of Jews among the Cordilleras.

The word "assassin" is derived, according to Hyle, from *Hassa*, to kill. Some bring it from Hassan, the first chief of the association; some from the Jewish Essene; Lemoine from a word meaning "herbage"; De Sacy and Von Hammer from "hashish," the opiate of hemp leaves, of which the assassins made a singular use.

The origin of the phrase "corporal oath" is to be found in the ancient usage of touching, upon occasion of attestation, the *corporale* or cloth which covered the consecrated articles.

Montgomery, in his lectures on *Literature* (!), has the following—"Who does not turn with absolute contempt from the signs, and gems, and filters, and caves, and genii

of Eastern Tales as from the trinkets of a toy-shop, and the trumpery of a raree show?" What man of genius but must answer "Not I"?

There is no particular air known throughout Switzerland by the name of *Ranz des Vaches*. Every canton has its own song, varying in words, notes, and even language. Mr. Cooper, the novelist, is our authority.

The Abbé de St. Pierre has fixed in his language two significant words—viz., *bienfaisance*, and the diminutive *la gloriole*.

"Incidis in Scyllam cupiens vitare Charybdim" is neither in Virgil nor Ovid, as often supposed, but in the "Alexandrics" of Philip Gaultier, a French poet of the thirteenth century.

The psalter of Solomon, which contains eighteen psalms, is a work which was found in Greek in the library of Augsburg, and has been translated into Latin by John Lewis de la Cerda. It is supposed not to be Solomon's, but the work of some Hellenistic Jew, and composed in imitation of David's psalms. The psalter was known to the ancients, and was formerly in the famous Alexandrian MS.

It is probable that the Queen of Sheba was Balkis, that Sheba was a kingdom in the southern part of Arabia Felix, and that the people were called Sabæans. These lines of Claudian relate to the people and queen:

"Medis, levibasque Sabæis
Imperat hic sexus; reginarumque sub armis
Barbariæ pars magna jacet."

Sheridan declared he would rather be the author of the ballad called "Hosier's Ghost," by Glover, than of the Annals of Tacitus.

The word Jehovah is not Hebrew. The Hebrews had no such letters as J or V. The word is properly Jah, Uah, compounded of *Jah*, essence, and *Uah*, existing. Its full meaning is the self-existing essence of all things.

The "Song of Solomon," throwing aside the heading of the chapters, which is the work of the English translators, contains nothing which relates to the Saviour or the Church. It does not, like every other sacred book, contain even the name of the Deity.

The word translated "slanderers" in 1 Timothy iii., 2, and that translated "false accusers" in Titus ii., 3, are "*female devils*" in the original Greek of the New Testament.

The Hebrew language contains no word (except perhaps Jehovah) which conveys to the mind the idea of eternity. The translators of the Old Testament have used the word "eternity" but once (Isa. lvii., 15).

A version of the Psalms was published in 1642 by William Slayter, of which this is a specimen:

"The righteous shall his sorrows scan,
And laugh at him, and say, 'Behold *i*

What hath become of this here man,
That on his riches was so bold.'"

Milton, in "Paradise Lost," has this passage:

"When the *scourge*
Inexorably, and the *torturing hour*
Call us to penance;"

Gray, in his "Ode to Adversity," has:

"Thou tamer of the human breast,
Whose Iron *scourge* and *torturing hour*
The bad affright."

Gray tells us that the image of his bard, where

"Loose his beard, and hoary hair
Streamed like a meteor to the troubled air,"

was taken from a picture by Raphael; yet the beard of Hudibras is also likened to a meteor:

"This hairy meteor did denounce
The fall of sceptres and of crowns."

Dryden, in his "Absalom and Achitophel," has these lines:

"David for him his tuneful harp hath strung,
And heaven had wanted one immortal song;"

Pope, in his "Epistle to Arbuthnot," has:—

"Friend of my life, which did not you prolong,
The world had wanted many an idle song."

In Suidas is a letter from Dionysius the Areopagite, dated Heliopolis in the fourth year of the 202d Olympiad (the year of Christ's crucifixion), to his friend Apollophanes, in which is mentioned a total eclipse of the sun

at noon. "Either," says Dionysius, "the author of nature suffers, or he sympathizes with some who do."

A curious passage in a letter from Cicero to his literary friend Papirius Pætus, shows that our custom of annexing a farce or pantomime to a tragic drama existed among the Romans.

In Hudibras are these lines:

> "Each window, like the pillory, appears
> With heads thrust through, nailed by the ears;"

Young, in his "Love of Fame," has the following:

> "An opera, like a pillory, may be said
> To nail our ears down and expose our head."

Goldsmith's celebrated lines,—

> "Man wants but little here below,
> Nor wants that little long,"

are stolen from Young, who has

> "Man wants but little, nor that little long."

Archbishop Usher, in a manuscript of St. Patrick's Life, said to have been found at Louvain as an original of a very remote date, detected several entire passages purloined from his own writings.

"The Slipper of Cinderella," says the editor of the new edition of Wharton, "finds a parallel in the history of Rhodope." Cinderella is a tale of universal currency. An ancient Danish ballad has some of the incidents. It is popular amongst the Welsh, also among the Poles, in Hesse, and in Servia. Schottky found it among the

Servian fables. Rollenbagen, in his *Froschmauseler,* speaks of it as the tale of the despised *Aschenpossel.* Luther mentions it. It is in the Italian Pentamerone under the title of Cenerentola.

Boileau is mistaken in saying that Petrarch, "*qui est regardé comme le père du sonnet,*" borrowed it from the French or Provençal writers. The Italian sonnet can be traced back as far as the year 1200. Petrarch was not born until 1304.

Dante gives the name of *sonnet* to his little canzone or ode beginning

"O voi che per la via d' Amor passate."

The lines

"For he that fights and runs away
May live to fight another day.
But he that is in battle slain
Will never rise to fight again,"

are not to be found, as is thought, in Hudibras. Butler's verses ran thus:

"For he that flies may fight again,
Which he can never do that 's slain."

The former are in a volume of "Poems" by Sir John Mennes, reign of Charles the Second. The original idea is in Demosthenes, *Ανηρ ὁ φενγων και παλιν μαχησεται.*

The noble simile of Milton, of Satan with the rising sun, in the first book of the "Paradise Lost," had nearly occasioned the suppression of that epic; it was supposed to contain a treasonable allusion.

Campbell's line,

"Like angel visits, few and far between,"

is a palpable plagiarism. Blair has

"Its visits,
Like angel visits, short and far between."

The character of the ancient Bacchus, that graceful divinity, seems to have been but little understood by Dryden. The line in Virgil,

"Et quocunque deus circum caput egit *honestum*,"

is thus grossly mistranslated:

"On whate'r side he turns his *honest* face."

Macrobius gives the form of an imprecation by which the Romans believed whole towns could be demolished and armies defeated. It commences: "Dis Pater sive Jovis mavis sive quo alio nomine fas est nominare," and ends, "Si hæc ita faxitis ut ego sciam, sentiam, intelligamque, tum quisquis votum hoc faxit recte factum esto, ovibus atris tribus, Tellus mater, teque, Jupiter, obtestor."

Courtier of Baldazzar Castiglione, 1528, is the first attempt at periodical moral essay with which we are acquainted. The *Noctes Atticæ* of Aulus Gellius cannot be allowed to rank as such.

These line were written over the closet-door of M. Menard:

"Las d' espérer, et de me plaindre
De l' amour, des grands, et du sort.
C' est ici que j' attends la mort
Sans la désirer ou la craindre."

Martin Luther, in his reply to Henry the Eighth's book, by which the latter acquired the title of "Defender of the Faith," calls the monarch very unceremoniously "a pig, an ass, a dunghill, the spawn of an adder, a basilisk, a lying buffoon dressed in a king's robes, a mad fool with a frothy mouth and a whorish face."

"An unshaped kind of something first appeared,"

is a line in Cowley's famous description of the Creation.

The "Turkish Spy" is the original of many similar works, among the best of which are Montesquieu's "Persian Letters," and the "British Spy" of our own Wirt. It was written undoubtedly by John Paul Marana, an Italian, *in* Italian, but probably was first published in French. Dr. Johnson, who only saw an English translation, supposed it an English work. Marana died in 1693.

Corneille's celebrated "Moi" of Medea is borrowed from Seneca. Racine, in "Phædra," has stolen nearly the whole scene of the declaration of love from the same puerile writer.

The peculiar zodiac of the comets is comprised in these verses of Cassini:

Antinous, Pegasusque, Andromeda, Taurus, Orion,
Procyon, atque Hydrus, Centaurus, Scorpius, Arcus.

A religious hubbub, such as the world has seldom seen, was excited, during the reign of Frederick II., by the *imagined* virulence of a book entitled "The Three Impostors." It was attributed to Pierre des Vignes, chancellor

of the king, who was accused by the Pope of having treated the religions of Moses, Jesus, and Mahomet as political fables. The work in question, however, which was squabbled about, abused, defended, and familiarly *quoted* by all parties, is well proved never to have existed.

Theophrastus, in his botanical works, anticipated the sexual system of Linnæus. Philolaus of Crotona maintained that comets appeared after a certain revolution—and Æcetes contended for the existence of what is now called the new world. Pulci, "The Sire of the Half Serious Rhyme," has a passage expressly alluding to a western continent. Dante, two centuries before, has the same allusion:

> "De vostri sensi ch'è del rimanente
> Non vogilate negar l' esperenza,
> Diretro al sol, del mondo sensa gente."

The "Lamentations" of Jeremiah are written, with the exception of the last chapter, in acrostic verse; that is to say, every line or couplet begins in alphabetical order, with some letter in the Hebrew alphabet. In the third chapter each letter is repeated three times successively.

The fullest account of the Amazons is to be found in Diodorus Siculus.

Cicero makes *finis* masculine, Virgil feminine. *Usque ad eum finem*—Cicero. *Quæ finis standi? Hæc finis Priami fatorum*—Virgil.

Dante left a poem in three languages—Latin, Provençal, and Italian. Rambaud de Vachieras left one in five.

Marcus Antoninus wrote a book entitled *Των εις εαυτον* —"Of the things which concern himself." It would be a good title for a diary.

The stream flowing through the middle of the valley of Jehosaphat is called in the Gospel of St. John "the brook of cedars." In the Septuagint the word is *κεδρον*, darkness, from the Hebrew *kiddar*, black, and not *κεδρων*, of cedars.

Seneca says that Appion, a grammarian of the age of Caligula, maintained that Homer himself made the division of the Iliad and Odyssey into books, and evidences the first word of the Iliad, *Μηνιν*, the *Μη* of which signifies 48, the number of books in both poems. Seneca, however, adds "*Talia sciat oportei qui multa vult scire.*"

Hedelin, a Frenchman, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, denied that any such person as Homer ever existed, and supposed the Iliad to be made up *ex tragediis, et variis canticis de trivio mendicatorum et circulatorum—à la maniere des chansons du Portneuf.*

There are about one thousand lines identical in the Iliad and Odyssey.

The shield of Achilles, in Homer, seems to have been copied from some *pharos* which the poet had seen in Egypt. What he describes on the central part of the shield is a map of the earth and of the celestial appearances.

Under a portrait of Tiberio Fiurelli, who invented the character of Scaramouch, are these verses :

" Cet illustre Comédien
De son art traca la carrière ;
Il fut le maître de Molière,
Et la Nature fut le sien."

In Cary's " Dante," the following passage :

" And pilgrim newly on his road with love,
Thrills if he hear the vesper bell from far,
That seems to mourn for the expiring day."

Gray has also—

" The curfew tolls the knell of parting day."

Marmontel, in the " Encyclopédie," declares that the Italians did not possess a single comedy worth reading—therein displaying his ignorance. Some of the greatest names in Italian literature were writers of comedy. Baretti mentions a collection of four thousand dramas made by Apostolo Leno, of which the greater part were comedies, many of a high order.

A comedy or opera by Andreini was the origin of " Paradise Lost." Andreini's " Adamo " was the model of Milton's Adam.

Milton has the expression " Forget thyself to marble." Pope has the line " I have not yet forgot myself to stone."

The most particular history of the Deluge, and the nearest of any to the account given by Moses, is to be found in Lucien (De Dea Syria).

The Greeks had no historian prior to Cadmus Milesius, nor any public inscription of which we can be certified before the laws of Draco.

So great is the uncertainty of ancient history that the epoch of Semiramis cannot be ascertained within 1535 years; for, according to

Syncellus,	she lived	before	Christ	2177
Patavius	"	"	"	2060
Helvicus	"	"	"	2248
Eusebius	"	"	"	1984
Mr. Jackson		"	"	1964
Archbishop Usher		"	"	1215
Philo Byblius, from Sanchoniathon				1200
Herodotus about . . .				713

An extract from "The Mystery of St. Dennis" is in the "Bibliothèque du Théâtre Française, depuis son origine," Dresde, 1768. In this serious drama, St. Dennis, having been tortured and at length decapitated, rises very quietly, takes his head under his arm, and walks off the stage in all the dignity of martyrdom.

The idea of "No light, but rather darkness visible" was perhaps suggested to Milton by Spenser's

> "A little glooming light much like a shade."

Francis le Brossano engraved these verses upon a marble tomb which he erected to Petrarch at Argua:

> "Frigida Francisci tegit hic lapis ossa Petrarcæ.
> Suscipe, virgo parens, animam; sate virgine, parce,
> Fessaque jam terris, cœli requiescat in arce."

Bochart derives *Elysium* from the Phœnician Elysoth,

joy, through the Greek *Ἠλυσιον*; *Circe* from the Phœnician Kirkar, to corrupt; *Siren* from the Phœnician Sir, to sing; *Scylla* from the Phœnician Scol, destruction; *Charybdis* from the Phœnician Chor-obdam, chasm of ruin.

Of the ten tragedies which are attributed to Seneca (the only Roman tragedies extant), nine are on Greek subjects.

Voltaire's ignorance of antiquity is laughable. In his Essay on Tragedy, prefixed to "Brutus," he actually boasts of having introduced the Roman senate on the stage in red mantles. "The Greeks," as he asserts, "*font paraître ses acteurs* (tragic) *sur des espèces d' échasses, le visage couvert d'un masque qui exprime la douleur d'un côté et la joye de l' autre.*" The only circumstance on which he could possibly have founded such an accusation is that in the *new comedy* masks were worn with one eyebrow drawn up and the other down, to denote a busybody or inquisitive meddler.

There is a book by a Jesuit, Père Labbe, entitled *La Bibliothèque des Bibliothèques;* it is a catalogue of all authors in all nations who have written catalogues of books.

Lucretius, lib. v., 93, 96, has the words—

"—— terres—
Una dies dabit exitio."

Ovid the lines,—

"Carmine sublimis tunc sunt peritura Lucretia,
Exitio terras cum dabit una dies."

It is a remarkable fact that during the whole period of the Middle Ages, the Germans lived in utter ignorance of the art of writing.

A version of the Psalms in 1564, by Archbishop Parker, has the following :

> " Who sticketh to God in stable trust,
> As Sion's mount he stands full just,
> Which moveth no whit, nor yet can reel,
> But standeth forever as stiff as steel."

A part of the 137th Psalm runs thus:—"If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth," which has been thus paraphrased in a version of the Psalms,—

> " If I forget thee ever,
> Then let me prosper never,
> But let it cause
> My tongue and jaws
> To cling and cleave together."

At the bottom of an obelisk which Pius VI. was erecting at great expense near the entrance of the Quirinal Palace in 1783, while the people were starving for bread, were found written these words :

> " Signore dia questa pietra chi divenga pane."
> " Lord, command that these stones be made bread."

SOME SECRETS OF THE MAGAZINE PRISON-HOUSE.

THE want of an International Copyright Law, by rendering it nearly impossible to obtain any thing from the booksellers in the way of remuneration for literary labor, has had the effect of forcing many of our best writers into the service of the Magazines and Reviews, which, with a pertinacity that does them credit, keep up in a certain or uncertain degree the good old saying, that even in the thankless field of Letters the laborer is worthy of his hire. How—by dint of what dogged instinct of the honest and proper—these journals have contrived to persist in their paying practices, in the very teeth of the opposition got up by the Fosters and Leonard Scotts, who furnish for eight dollars any four of the British periodicals for a year, is a point we have had much difficulty in settling to our satisfaction, and we have been forced to settle it at last upon no more reasonable ground than that of a still lingering *esprit de patrie*. That Magazines can live, and not only live but thrive, and not only thrive but afford to disburse money for original contribu-

tions, are facts which can only be solved, under the circumstances, by the really fanciful but still agreeable supposition that there is somewhere still existing an ember not altogether quenched among the fires of good feeling for letters and literary men that once animated the American bosom.

It would *not do* (perhaps this is the idea) to let our poor-devil authors absolutely starve while we grow fat, in a literary sense, on the good things of which we unblushingly pick the pocket of all Europe; it would not be exactly the thing *comme il faut* to permit a positive atrocity of this kind; and hence we have Magazines, and hence we have a portion of the public who subscribe to these Magazines (through sheer pity), and hence we have Magazine publishers (who sometimes take upon themselves the duplicate title of "editor *and* proprietor")—publishers, we say, who, under certain conditions of good conduct, occasional puffs, and decent subserviency at all times, make it a point of conscience to encourage the poor-devil author with a dollar or two, more or less, as he behaves himself properly and abstains from the indecent habit of turning up his nose.

We hope, however, that we are not so prejudiced or so vindictive as to insinuate that what certainly does look like illiberality on the part of them (the Magazine publishers) is really an illiberality chargeable to *them*. In fact, it will be seen at once that what we have said has a tendency directly the reverse of any such accusation.

These publishers pay *something*,—other publishers nothing at all. Here certainly is a difference,—although a mathematician might contend that the difference might be infinitesimally small. Still, these Magazine editors and proprietors *pay* (that is the word), and with your true poor-devil author the smallest favors are sure to be thankfully received. No: the illiberality lies at the door of the demagogue-ridden public, who suffer their anointed delegates (or perhaps arointed,—which is it?) to insult the common-sense of them (the public) by making orations in our national halls on the beauty and conveniency of robbing the Literary Europe on the highway, and on the gross absurdity in especial of admitting so unprincipled a principle that a man has any right and title either to his own brains or to the flimsy material that he chooses to spin out of them, like a confounded caterpillar as he is. If any thing of this gossamer character stands in need of protection, why, we have our hands full at once with the silk-worms and the *morus multicaulis*.

But if we cannot, under the circumstances, complain of the absolute illiberality of the Magazine publishers (since pay they do), there is at least one particular in which we have against them good grounds of accusation. Why (since pay they must) do they not pay with a good grace and *promptly?* Were we in an ill-humor at this moment we could a tale unfold which would erect the hair on the head of Shylock. A young author, struggling with Despair itself in the shape of a ghastly poverty, which has

no alleviation,—no sympathy from an every-day world, that cannot understand his necessities, and that would pretend not to understand them if it comprehended them ever so well,—this young author is politely requested to compose an article, for which he will "be handsomely paid." Enraptured, he neglects perhaps for a month the sole employment which affords him the chance of a livelihood, and, having starved through the month (he and his family), completes at length the month of starvation and the article, and despatches the latter (with a broad hint about the former) to the pursy "editor" and bottle-nosed "proprietor" who has condescended to honor him (the poor devil) with his patronage. A month (starving still), and no reply. Another month,—still none. Two months more,—still none. A second letter, modestly hinting that the article may not have reached its destination,—still no reply. At the expiration of six additional months, personal application is made at the "editor's" and "proprietor's" office. Call again. The poor devil goes out, and does not fail to call again. Still call again;—and call again is the word for three or four months more. His patience exhausted, the article is demanded. No,—he can't have it,—(the truth is, it was too good to be given up so easily),—"it is in print," and "contributions of this character are never paid for (it is a *rule* we have) under six months after publication. Call in six months after the issue of your affair, and your money is ready for you—for we are business men ourselves—prompt." With this the

poor devil is satisfied, and makes up his mind that the "editor and proprietor" is a gentleman, and that of course he (the poor devil) will wait as requested. And it is supposable that he would have waited if he could,—but Death in the meantime would not. He dies, and by the good luck of his decease (which came by starvation) the fat "editor and proprietor" is fat henceforward and forever to the amount of five-and-twenty dollars, very cleverly saved, to be spent generously in canvas-backs and champagne.

There are two things which we hope the reader will not do as he runs over this article: first, we hope that he will not believe that we write from any personal experience of our own, for we have only the reports of actual sufferers to depend upon; and second, that he will not make any personal application of our remarks to any Magazine publisher now living, it being well known that they are all as remarkable for their generosity and urbanity as for their intelligence and appreciation of Genius.

ANASTATIC PRINTING.

IT is admitted by every one that of late there has been a rather singular invention, called Anastatic Printing, and that this invention may possibly lead, in the course of time, to some rather remarkable results,—among which the one chiefly insisted upon is the abolition of the ordinary stereotyping process,—but this seems to be the amount, in America, at least, of distinct understanding on this subject.

"There is no exquisite beauty," says Bacon, "without some strangeness in the proportions." The philosopher had reference, here, to beauty in its common acceptation, —but the remark is equally applicable to all the forms of beauty,—that is to say, to every thing which arouses profound interest in the heart or intellect of man. In every such thing, strangeness—in other words *novelty*—will be found a principal element: and so universal is this law that it has no exception even in the case of this principal element itself. Nothing unless it be novel—*not even novelty itself*—will be the source of very intense excitement among men. Thus the *ennuyé* who travels in the

hope of dissipating his *ennui* by the perpetual succession of novelties will invariably be disappointed in the end. He receives the impression of novelty so continuously that it is at length no novelty to receive it. And the man, in general, of the nineteenth century—more especially of our own particular epoch of it—is very much in the predicament of the traveller in question. We are so habituated to new inventions that we no longer get from newness the vivid interest which should appertain to the new,—and no example could be adduced more distinctly showing that the *mere* importance of a novelty will not suffice to gain for it universal attention than we find in the invention of *Anastatic Printing*. It excites not one-fiftieth part of the comment which was excited by the comparatively frivolous invention of Sennefelder;—but he lived in the good old days when a novelty was novel. Nevertheless, while Lithography opened the way for a very agreeable pastime, it is the province of Anastatic Printing to revolutionize the world.

By means of this discovery any thing written, drawn, or printed can be made to stereotype itself, with absolute accuracy, in five minutes.

Let us take, for example, a page of this Journal; supposing only one side of the leaf to have printing on it. We damp the leaf with a certain acid diluted, and then place it between two leaves of blotting-paper to absorb superfluous moisture. We then place the printed side in contact with a zinc plate that lies on the table. The acid

in the interspaces between the letters immediately corrodes the zinc, but the acid on the letters themselves has no such effect, having been neutralized by the ink. Removing the leaf at the end of five minutes, we find a reversed copy, in slight relief, of the printing on the page,—in other words, we have a stereotype-plate, from which we can print a vast number of absolute fac-similes of the original printed page,—which latter has not been at all injured in the process,—that is to say, we can still produce from it (or from any impression of the stereotype-plate) new stereotype-plates *ad libitum*. Any engraving, or any pen-and-ink drawing, or any MS. can be stereotyped in precisely the same manner.

The *facts* of the invention are established. The process is in successful operation both in London and Paris. We have seen several specimens of printing done from the plates described, and have now lying before us a leaf (from the London Art-Union) covered with drawing, MS., letter-press, and impressions from wood-cuts,—the whole printed from the Anastatic stereotypes, and warranted by the Art-Union to be absolute *fac-similes* of the originals.

The process can scarcely be regarded as a *new* invention—and appears to be rather the modification and successful application of two or three previously ascertained principles—those of etching, electrography, lithography, etc. It follows from this that there will be much difficulty in establishing or maintaining a right of patent, and the probability is that the benefits of the process will soon

be thrown open to the world. As to the secret—it can only be a secret in name.

That the discovery (if we may so call it) has been made, can excite no surprise in any thinking person—the only matter for surprise is that it has not been made many years ago. The obviousness of the process, however, in no degree lessens its importance. Indeed, its inevitable results enkindle the imagination and embarrass the understanding.

Every one will perceive at once that the ordinary process of stereotyping will be abolished. Through this ordinary process a publisher, to be sure, is enabled to keep on hand the means of producing edition after edition of any work the certainty of whose sale will justify the cost of stereotyping—which is trifling *in comparison* with that of re-setting the matter. But still, *positively*, this cost (of stereotyping) is great. Moreover, there cannot always be certainty about sales. Publishers frequently are forced to re-set works which they have neglected to stereotype, thinking them unworthy the expense; and many excellent works are not published at all, because small editions do not pay, and the anticipated sales will not warrant the cost of stereotype. *Some* of these difficulties will be at once remedied by the Anastatic Printing, and *all* will be remedied in a brief time. A publisher has only to print as many copies as are immediately demanded. He need print no more than a dozen, indeed, unless he feels perfectly confident of success. Preserving *one* copy,

he can from this, at no other cost than that of the zinc, produce with any desirable rapidity, as many impressions as he may think proper. Some idea of the advantages thus accruing may be gleaned from the fact that in several of the London publishing warehouses there is deposited in stereotype-plates alone property to the amount of a million sterling.

The next view of the case, in point of obviousness, is, that if necessary, a hundred thousand impressions per hour, or even infinitely more, can be taken of any newspaper, or similar publication. As many presses can be put in operation as the occasion may require—indeed, there can be no limit to the number of copies producible, provided we have no limit to the number of presses.

The tendency of all this to cheapen information, to diffuse knowledge and amusement, and to bring before the public the very class of works which are most valuable, but least in circulation on account of unsalability—is what need scarcely be suggested to any one. But benefits such as these are merely the immediate and most obvious—by no means the most important.

For some years, perhaps, the strong spirit of conventionality—of conservation—will induce authors in general to have recourse, as usual, to the setting of type. A printed book *now* is more sightly, and more legible than any MS., and for some years the idea will not be overthrown that this state of things is one of necessity. But by degrees it will be remembered that, while MS. was a

necessity, men wrote after such fashion that no books printed in modern times have surpassed their MSS. either in accuracy or in beauty. This consideration will lead to the cultivation of a neat and distinct style of handwriting —for authors will perceive the immense advantage of giving their own MSS. directly to the public without the expensive interference of the type-setter, and the often ruinous intervention of the publisher. All that a man of letters need do, will be to pay some attention to legibility of MS., arrange his pages to suit himself, and stereotype them instantaneously, as arranged. He may intersperse them with his own drawings, or with any thing to please his own fancy, in the certainty of being fairly brought before his readers with all the freshness of his original conception about him.

And at this point we are arrested by a consideration of infinite moment, although of a seemingly shadowy character. The cultivation of accuracy in MS. thus enforced will tend, with an inevitable impetus, to every species of improvement in style, more especially in the points of concision and distinctness; and this again in a degree even more noticeable, to precision of thought and luminous arrangement of matter. There is a very peculiar and easily intelligible reciprocal influence between the thing written and the manner of writing, but the latter has the predominant influence of the two. The more remote effect on philosophy at large, which will inevitably result from improvement of style and thought in the points of concision,

distinctness, and accuracy, need only be suggested to be conceived.

As a consequence of attention being directed to neatness and beauty of MS., the antique profession of the scribe will be revived, affording abundant employment to women, their delicacy of organization fitting them peculiarly for such tasks. The female amanuensis, indeed, will occupy very nearly the position of the present male typesetter, whose industry will be diverted perforce into other channels.

These considerations are of vital importance, but there is yet one beyond them all. The value of every book is a compound of its literary value and its physical or mechanical value, as the product of physical labor applied to the physical material. But at present the latter value immensely predominates even in the works of the most esteemed authors. It will be seen, however, that the new condition of things will at once give the ascendancy to the literary values, and thus, by their literary values, will books come to be estimated among men. The wealthy gentleman of "elegant leisure" will lose the vantage-ground now afforded him, and will be forced to tilt on terms of equality with the poor-devil author. At present the literary world is a species of anomalous congress, in which the majority of the members are constrained to listen in silence while all the eloquence proceeds from a privileged few. In the new *régime* the humblest will speak as often and as freely as the most exalted, and will

be sure of receiving just that amount of attention which the intrinsic merit of their speeches may deserve.

From what we have said it will be evident that the discovery of Anastatic Printing will not only not obviate the necessity of copyright laws, and of an international law in especial, but will render this necessity more imperative and more apparent. It has been shown that in depressing the value of the *physique* of a book the invention will proportionately elevate the value of its *morale*, and since it is the latter value alone which the copyright laws are needed to protect, the necessity of the protection will be only the more urgent and more obvious than ever.

FIFTY SUGGESTIONS.

I.

IT is observable that, while among all nations the omni-color, white, has been received as an emblem of the Pure, the no-color, black, has by no means been generally admitted as *sufficiently* typical of impurity. There are blue devils as well as black; and when we think *very* ill of a woman, and wish to *blacken* her character, we merely call her "a *blue*-stocking," and advise her to read, in Rabelais' "*Gargantua*," the chapter "*de ce qui est signifié par les couleurs blanc et bleu.*" There is far more difference between these "*couleurs*," in fact, than that which exists between simple *black* and white. Your "blue," when we come to talk of stockings, is black in *issimo*—"*nigrum nigrious nigro*"—like the matter from which Raymond Lully first manufactured his alcohol.

II.

Mr. ———, I perceive, has been appointed Librarian to the new —— Athenæum. To him, the appointment

is advantageous in many respects. Especially:—"*Mon cousin, voici une belle occasion pour apprende à lire!*"

III.

As far as I can understand the "loving our enemies," it implies the hating our friends.

IV.

In commencing our dinners with gravy soup, no doubt we have taken a hint from Horace, who says:

——— Da si *grave* non est,
Quæ prima iratum ventrem placeverit isca.

V.

Of much of our cottage architecture we may safely say, I think, (admitting the good intention,) that it *would* have been Gothic if it had not felt it its duty to be Dutch.

VI.

James's multitudinous novels seem to be written upon the plan of "the songs of the Bard of Schiraz," in which, we are assured by Fadladeen, "the same beautiful thought occurs again and again in every possible variety of phrase."

VII.

Some of our foreign lions resemble the human brain in one very striking particular. They are without any sense themselves, and yet are the centres of sensation.

VIII.

Mirabeau, I fancy, acquired his wonderful tact at fore-

seeing and meeting *contingencies*, during his residence in the stronghold of *If*.

IX.

Cottle's "Reminiscences of Coleridge" is just such a book as damns its perpetrator forever in the opinion of every gentleman who reads it. More and more every day do we moderns *povoneggiarsi* about our Christianity; yet, so far as the *spirit* of Christianity is concerned, we are immeasurably behind the ancients. Mottoes and proverbs are the indices of national character; and the Anglo-Saxons are disgraced in having no proverbial equivalent to the "*De mortuis nil nisi bonum.*" Moreover—where, in all statutory Christendom, shall we find a *law* so Christian as the "*Defuncti injuriâ ne afficiantur*" of the Twelve Tables? The simple *negative* injunction of the Latin law and proverb—the injunction *not to do ill* to the dead—seems, at a first glance, scarcely susceptible of improvement in the delicate respect of its terms. I cannot help thinking, however, that the sentiment, if not the idea intended, is more forcibly conveyed in an apothegm by one of the old English moralists, James Puckle. By an ingenious figure of speech he contrives to imbue the negation of the Roman command with a spirit of active and positive beneficence. "When speaking of the dead," he says, in his "Gray Cap for a Green Head": "*so fold up your discourse that their virtues may be outwardly shown, while their vices are wrapped up in silence.*"

X.

I have no doubt that the Fourierites honestly fancy "a nasty poet fit for nothing" to be the true translation of "*poeta nascitur non fit.*"

XI.

There surely can*not* be "more things in Heaven and Earth than are dreamt of" (oh, Andrew Jackson Davis!) "in *your* philosophy."

XII.

"It is only as the Bird of Paradise quits us in taking wing," observes, or should observe, some poet, "that we obtain a full view of the beauty of its plumage"; and it is only as the politician is about being "turned out" that, like the snake of the Irish Chronicle when touched by St. Patrick, he "awakens to a sense of his *situation.*"

XIII.

Newspaper editors seem to have constitutions closely similar to those of the Deities in "Walhalla," who cut each other to pieces every day, and yet get up perfectly sound and fresh every morning.

XIV.

As far as I can comprehend the modern cant in favor of "unadulterated Saxon," it is fast leading us to the language of that region where, as Addison has it, "they sell the best fish and speak the plainest English."

XV.

The frightfully long money-pouches, "like the cucumber called the Gigantic," which have come in vogue

among our belles, are *not* of Parisian origin, as many suppose, but are strictly indigenous here. The fact is, such a fashion would be quite out of place in Paris, where it is money *only* that women keep in a purse. The purse of an American lady, however, must be large enough to carry both her money and the soul of its owner.

XVI.

I can see no objection to gentlemen "standing for Congress"—provided they stand on one side; nor to their "running for Congress"—if they are in a very great hurry to get there; but it would be a blessing if some of them could be persuaded into sitting still, for Congress, after they arrive.

XVII.

If *Envy*, as Cyprian has it, be "the moth of the soul," whether shall we regard *Content* as its Scotch snuff or its camphor?

XVIII.

M——, having been "used up" in the "—— Review," goes about town lauding his critic, as an epicure lauds the best London mustard—with the tears in his eyes.

XIX.

"*Con tal que las costumbres de un autor sean puras y castas*," says the Catholic Don Tomas de las Torres, in the preface to his "Amatory Poems," "*importo muy poco qui no sean igualmente severas sus obras*"—meaning, in plain English, that, provided the personal morals of an author are pure, it matters little what those of his books are.

For so unprincipled an idea, Don Tomas, no doubt, is still having a hard time of it in Purgatory; and, by way of most pointedly manifesting their disgust at his philosophy on the topic in question, many modern theologians and divines are now busily squaring their conduct by his proposition exactly *conversed*.

XX.

Children are never too tender to be whipped—like tough beef-steaks, the more you beat them the more tender they become.

XXI.

Lucian, in describing the statue "with its surface of Parian marble and its interior filled with rags," must have been looking with a prophetic eye at some of our great "moneyed institutions."

XXII.

That poets (using the word comprehensively, as including artists in general) are a *genus irritabile* is well understood; but the *why* seems not to be commonly seen. An artist *is* an artist only by dint of his exquisite sense of Beauty—a sense affording him rapturous enjoyment, but at the same time implying, or involving, an equally exquisite sense of Deformity of disproportion. Thus a wrong, an injustice, done a poet who is really a poet, excites him to a degree which, to ordinary apprehension, appears disproportionate with the wrong. Poets *see* injustice—*never* where it does not exist—but very often where the unpoetical see no injustice whatever. Thus the poet-

ical irritability has no reference to "semper" in the vulgar sense, but merely to a more than usual clear-sightedness in respect to wrong; this clear-sightedness being nothing more than a corollary from the vivid perception of right, of justice, of proportion—in a word, of *το καλον*. But one thing is clear; that the man who is not "irritable" (to the ordinary apprehension) is *no poet*.

XXIII.

Let a man succeed ever so evidently—ever so demonstrably—in many different displays of *genius*, the envy of criticism will agree with the popular voice in denying him more than *talent* in any. Thus a poet who has achieved a great (by which I mean an effective) poem, should be cautious not to distinguish himself in any other walk of Letters. In especial, let him make no effort in Science, unless anonymously or with the view of waiting patiently the judgment of posterity. Because universal or even versatile geniuses have rarely or never been known, *therefore*, thinks the world, none such can ever be. A "therefore" of this kind is, with the world, conclusive. But what is the *fact*, as taught us by analysis of mental power? Simply, that the *highest* genius—that the genius which all men instantaneously acknowledge as such—which acts upon individuals, as well as upon the mass, by a species of magnetism incomprehensible but irresistible and *never resisted*—that this genuis which demonstrates itself in the simplest gesture, or even by the absence of all—this genius which speaks without a voice

and flashes from the unopened eye—is but the result of generally large mental power existing in a state of *absolute proportion*, so that no one faculty has undue predominance. *That* factitious "genius"—that "genius" in the popular sense which is but the manifestation of the abnormal predominance of some one faculty over all the others, and, of course, at the expense and to the detriment of all the others—is a result of mental disease or, rather, of organic malformation of mind:—it is this and nothing more. Not only will such "genius" fail, if turned aside from the path indicated by its predominant faculty; but, even when pursuing this path—when producing those works in which, certainly, it is *best* calculated to succeed—will give unmistakable indications of *unsoundness*, in respect to general intellect. Hence, indeed, arises the just idea that

"Great wit to madness nearly is allied."

I say "*just* idea"; for by "great wit," in this case, the poet intends precisely the pseudo-genius to which I refer. The true genius, on the other hand, is necessarily, if not universal in its manifestations, at least capable of universality; and if, attempting all things, it succeeds in one rather better than in another, this is merely on account of a certain bias by which *Taste* leads it with more earnestness in the one direction than in the other. With equal zeal, it would succeed equally in all.

To sum up our results in respect to this very simple but much *vexata questio:*

What the world calls "genius" is the state of mental disease arising from the undue predominance of some one of the faculties. The works of such genius are never sound in themselves, and, in especial, always betray the general mental insanity.

The *proportion* of the mental faculties, in a case where the general mental power is *not* inordinate, gives that result which we distinguish as *talent*:—and the talent is greater or less, first, as the general mental power is greater or less; and, secondly, as the proportion of the faculties is more or less absolute.

The proportion of the faculties, in a case where the mental power is inordinately great, gives that result which *is* the true *genius* (but which, on account of the proportion and seeming simplicity of its works, is seldom acknowledged to *be* so); and the genius is greater or less, first, as the general mental power is more or less inordinately great; and, secondly, as the proportion of the faculties is more or less absolute.

An objection will be made: that the greatest excess of mental power, however proportionate, does not seem to satisfy our idea of genius, unless we have, in addition, sensibility, passion, energy. The reply is, that the "absolute proportion" spoken of, when applied to inordinate mental power, gives, as a result, the appreciation of Beauty and horror of Deformity which we call sensibility, together with that intense vitality which is implied when we speak of "Energy" or "Passion."

XXIV.

"And Beauty draws us by a single hair."—Capillary attraction, of course.

XXV.

It is by no means clear, as regards the present revolutionary spirit of Europe, that it is a spirit which "moveth altogether if it move at all." In Great Britain it may be kept quiet for half a century yet, by placing at the head of affairs an experienced medical man. He should keep his forefinger constantly on the pulse of the patient, and exhibit *panem* in gentle doses, with as much *circenses* as the stomach can be made to retain.

XXVI.

The taste manifested by our Transcendental poets *is* to be treated "reverentially," beyond doubt, as one of Mr. Emerson's friends suggests—for the fact is, it is Taste on her death-bed—Taste kicking *in articulo mortis.*

XXVII.

I should not say, of Taglioni, exactly that she dances, but that she laughs with her arms and legs, and that if she takes vengeance on her present oppressors, she will be amply justified by the *lex Talionis.*

XXVIII.

The world is infested, just now, by a new sect of philosophers, who have not yet suspected themselves of forming a sect, and who, consequently, have adopted no name. They are the *Believers in every thing Old.* Their High-

Priest in the East is Charles Fourier—in the West, Horace Greely; and high-priests they are to some purpose. The only common bond among the sect, is Credulity:—let us call it Insanity at once, and be done with it. Ask any one of them *why* he believes this or that, and, if he be conscientious (ignorant people usually are), he will make you very much such a reply as Talleyrand made when asked why he believed in the Bible. "I believe in it first," said he, "because I am Bishop of Autun; and, secondly, *because I know nothing about it at all.*" What these philosophers call "argument," is a way they have "*de nier ce qui est et d'expliquer ce qui n'est pas.*"*

XXIX.

K——, the publisher, trying to be critical, talks about books pretty much as a washer-woman would about Niagara falls or a poulterer about a phœnix.

XXX.

The ingenuity of critical malice would often be laughable but for the disgust which, even in the most perverted spirits, injustice never fails to excite. A common *trick* is that of decrying, impliedly, the higher, by insisting upon the lower merits of an author. Macaulay, for example, deeply feeling how much critical acumen is enforced by cautious attention to the mere "rhetoric" which is its vehicle, has at length become the best of modern rhetoricians. His *brother* reviewers—anonymous, of course, and

* Nouvelle Héloise.

likely to remain so forever—extol "the acumen of Carlyle, the analysis of Schlegel, *and* the style of Macaulay." Bancroft is a philosophical historian; but no amount of philosophy has yet taught him to despise a minute accuracy in point of fact. His *brother* historians talk of "the grace of Prescott, the erudition of Gibbon, *and* the painstaking precision of Bancroft." Tennyson, perceiving how vividly an imaginative effect is aided, now and then, by a certain quaintness judiciously introduced, brings this latter, at times, in support of his most glorious and most delicate imagination:—whereupon his *brother* poets hasten to laud the imagination of Mr. Somebody, whom nobody imagined to have any, "*and* the somewhat affected quaintness of Tennyson."—Let the noblest poet add to his other excellence—if he dares—that of faultless versification and scrupulous attention to grammar. He is damned at once. His rivals have it in their power to discourse of "A. the true poet, *and* B. the versifier and disciple of Lindley Murray."

XXXI.

The goddess Laverna, who is a head without a body, could not do better, perhaps, than make advances to "La Jeune France," which, for some years to come, at least, must otherwise remain a body without a head.

XXXII.

H—— calls his verse a "poem," very much as Francis the First bestowed the title, *mes déserts*, upon his snug little deer-park at Fontainebleau.

XXXIII.

Mr. A—— is frequently spoken of as "one of our most industrious writers"; and, in fact, when we consider how much he has written, we perceive, at once, that he *must* have been industrious, or he could never (like an honest woman as he is) have so thoroughly succeeded in keeping himself from being "talked about."

XXXIV.

That a cause leads to an effect is scarcely more certain than that, so far as Morals are concerned, a repetition of effect tends to the generation of cause. Herein lies the principle of what we so vaguely term "Habit."

XXXV.

With the exception of Tennyson's "Locksley Hall," I have never read a poem combining so much of the fiercest passion with so much of the most delicate imagination, as the "Lady Geraldine's Courtship" of Miss Barrett. I am forced to admit, however, that the latter work *is* a palpable imitation of the former, which it surpasses in thesis, as much as it falls below it in a certain calm energy, lustrous and indomitable—such as we might imagine in a broad river of molten gold.

XXXVI.

What has become of the inferior planet which Decuppis, about nine years ago, declared he saw traversing the disc of the sun?

XXXVII.

"Ignorance *is* bliss"—but, that the bliss be real, the

ignorance must be so profound as not to suspect itself ignorant. With this understanding, Boileau's line may be read thus:

"Le plus fou *toujours* est le plus satisfait,"

—"*toujours*" in place of "*souvent.*"

XXXVIII.

Bryant and Street are both, essentially, descriptive poets; and descriptive poetry, even in its happiest manifestation, is *not* of the highest order. But the distinction between Bryant and Street is very broad. While the former, in reproducing the sensible images of Nature, reproduces the sentiments with which he regards them, the latter gives us the images and nothing beyond. He never forces us to feel what we feel he must have felt.

XXXIX.

In lauding Beauty, Genius merely evinces a filial affection. To Genius Beauty gives life—reaping often a reward in Immortality.

XL.

And this is the "American Drama" of——! Well!—that "Conscience which makes cowards of us all" will permit me to say, in praise of the performance, only that it is not quite so bad as I expected it to be. But then I always expect too much.

XLI.

What we feel to be *Fancy* will be found fanciful still, whatever be the theme which engages it. No *subject*

exalts it into Imagination. When Moore is termed "a fanciful poet," the epithet is applied with precision. He *is*. He is fanciful in "Lalla Rookh," and had he written the "Inferno," in the "Inferno" he would have contrived to be still fanciful and nothing beyond.

XLII.

When we speak of "a suspicious man," we may mean either one who suspects, or one to be suspected. Our language needs either the adjective "suspectful," or the adjective "suspectable."

XLIII.

"To love," says Spenser, "is

> "To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
> To speed, to give, to want, to be undone."

The philosophy, here, might be rendered more profound, by the mere omission of a comma. We all know the *willing* blindness—the *voluntary* madness of Love. We express this in thus punctuating the last line:

> To speed, to give—*to want to be undone.*

It is a case, in short, where we gain a point by omitting it.

XLIV.

Miss Edgeworth seems to have had only an approximate comprehension of "Fashion," for she says: "If it was the fashion to burn me, and I at the stake, I hardly know ten persons of my acquaintance who would refuse to throw on a fagot." There are *many* who, in such a case,

would "refuse to throw on a fagot"—for fear of smothering out the fire.

XLV.

I am beginning to think with Horsley—that "the People have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them."

XLVI.

"It is not fair to review my book without reading it," says Mr. Mathews, talking at the critics, and, as usual, expecting impossibilities. That man who is clever enough to *write* such a work, is clever enough to read it, no doubt; but we should not look for so much talent in the world at large. Mr. Mathews will not imagine that I mean to blame *him*. The book alone is in fault, after all. The fact is that, "*er lasst sich nicht lesen*"—it will not *permit* itself to be read. Being a hobby of Mr. Mathews', and brimful of spirit, it will let nobody mount it but Mr. Mathews.

XLVII.

It is only to teach his children Geography, that G—— wears a boot the picture of Italy upon the map.

XLVIII.

In his great Dictionary, Webster seems to have had an idea of being more English than the English—"*plus Arabe qu'en Arabie.*"*

XLIX.

That there were once "seven wise men" is by no

* Count Anthony Hamilton.

means, strictly speaking, an historical *fact;* and I am rather inclined to rank the idea among the Kabbala.

L.

Painting their faces to look like Macaulay, some of our critics manage to resemble him, at length, as a Massaccian does a Raffäellian Virgin; and, except that the former is feebler and thinner than the other—suggesting the idea of its being the ghost of the other—not one connoisseur in ten can perceive any difference. But then, unhappily, even the street lazzaroni can feel the distinction.